A TRIDENT SCHOLAR PROJECT REPORT

NO. 269

THE MULTILATERAL FORCE:
AMERICA'S NUCLEAR SOLUTION FOR NATO (1960-1965)

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 074-0188

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATE COVERED
	4 May 1999	

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
The multilateral force: America's nuclear solution for NATO (1960-1965)

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

6. AUTHOR(S)
Solomon, James B.

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S. Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
USNA Trident Scholar project report no. 269 (1999)

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
Accepted by the U.S. Trident Scholar Committee

12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
This document has been approved for public release; its distribution is UNLIMITED.

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT: This project concerns the politics and diplomacy of the American proposal to create a NATO multilateral nuclear fleet in the early 1960s and deals with the themes that emerge during its consideration within the Alliance. The Multilateral Force represented an American attempt to solve the "nuclear dilemma" which statesmen and strategists believed would confront NATO following the end of the Eisenhower Administration. Western European allies increasingly pressed Washington to include the rest of NATO in the nuclear defense of Europe. The American answer was a plan to create a fleet of ships, bearing Polaris ballistic missiles carrying nuclear weapons, manned by multinational crews, and under NATO command and control. Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy hoped that this fleet would provide their European partners with a greater sense of inclusion in nuclear defense matters.The Multilateral Force received significant attention in NATO circles throughout the first half of the 1960s, yet very little has been published on the proposed missile fleet. Moreover, with few exceptions, studies dealing with MLF were not informed by archival research inasmuch as most documents dealing with NATO nuclear policy were classified until quite recently. This account rests on archival research undertaken at the Public Records Office in London and the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, and is the first study to make use of these recently declassified documents. Its purpose is to present an updated account of the international politics and diplomacy attending the Multilateral Force scheme, to show that these negotiations portray why the NATO alliance remained healthy, and to suggest its contribution to the outcome of the Cold War.

14. SUBJECT TERMS
Multilateral Force, MLF, NATO, MRBM, Polaris

15. NUMBER OF PAGES

16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT

U.S.N.A. --- Trident Scholar project report; no. 269 (1999)

THE MULTILATERAL FORCE: AMERICA'S NUCLEAR SOLUTION FOR NATO (1960-1965)

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This project concerns the politics and diplomacy of the American proposal to create a NATO multilateral nuclear fleet in the early 1960s and deals with the themes that emerge during its consideration within the Alliance.

The Multilateral Force represented an American attempt to solve the "nuclear dilemma" which statesmen and strategists believed would confront NATO following the end of the Eisenhower Administration. Western European allies increasingly pressed Washington to include the rest of NATO in the nuclear defense of Europe. The American answer was a plan to create a fleet of ships, bearing Polaris ballistic missiles carrying nuclear weapons, manned by multinational crews, and under NATO command and control. Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy hoped that this fleet would provide their European partners with a greater sense of inclusion in nuclear defense matters.

The Multilateral Force received significant attention in NATO circles throughout the first half of the 1960s, yet very little has been published on the proposed missile fleet. Moreover, with few exceptions, studies dealing with MLF were not informed by archival research inasmuch as most documents dealing with NATO nuclear policy were classified until quite recently. This account rests on archival research undertaken at the Public Records Office in London and the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, and is the first study to make use of these recently declassified documents. Its purpose is to present an updated account of the international politics and diplomacy attending the Multilateral Force scheme, to show that these negotiations portray why the NATO alliance remained healthy, and to suggest its contribution to the outcome of the Cold War.

KEYWORDS: Multilateral Force, MLF, NATO, MRBM, Polaris

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could not have completed a project of this sort without the help of generous mentors and friends. I am particularly grateful to Professor Love who gave up numerous hours of his own time to help me overcome my undergraduate prose. I deeply appreciated his patience in this endeavor.

I am also thankful for my parents and friends who provided much needed encouragement throughout the year.

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Chapter One

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization faced what American diplomat Robert von Pagenhardt termed a "nuclear dilemma" at the beginning of the 1960s.[1] The Alliance had just celebrated its tenth anniversary and while its purpose remained constant over those years, the world had greatly changed. The Western European economy had recovered from World War II; Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States possessed nuclear weapons and efficient intercontinental delivery systems; and nuclear weapons had emerged as benchmarks of international power and status. As a result, NATO policies and strategies devised for the 1950s were no longer sufficient.

The nations of Western Europe joined with the United States in 1949 in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This arrangement linked the Atlantic community in a cooperative effort to defend against the Soviet military threat positioned in Eastern Europe. The war-torn countries of Western Europe did not have the military strength to fight off a Russian attack alone, but gained nuclear protection by allying themselves with the United States. The Soviets were superior to the Allies in almost every military category, but NATO leveled the playing field by bringing to bear Washington's nuclear warrant. As a result, Americans dominated the Alliance's strategic planning during its early years owing to NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons as the primary means of defense. The Europeans were mostly content with this state of affairs in the 1950s; rebuilding the continent politically, economically, and militarily to its pre-war position occupied their attention. However, by 1960, European discontent became evident. The United States' monopoly over NATO's nuclear strategy and planning gave rise to the

"nuclear dilemma" facing NATO in the early 1960s. The dilemma was how to counter the Soviet threat against Europe with a well conceived Alliance strategy that gave the European members a role in their own nuclear defense but did not promote proliferation.

By 1960, Europe had recovered economically and politically and was ready to play a more robust role in its nuclear defense. Nuclear weapons symbolized international power and status and many NATO allies saw them as a way of restoring their waning international positions. In 1950, only the United States and the Soviet Union possessed nuclear weapons, but within ten years Great Britain had joined the club and the French, Chinese, and Indian programs were well underway. A fear arose within the international community owing to the increasing number of national nuclear forces as it was assumed that this enhanced the risk of a nuclear war being initiated by a foolish act. Furthermore, it made a nuclear exchange harder to predict or control supposing that each power would fire its weapons at its own discretion. Thus, the need to control the spread of national nuclear forces co-existed with demands from Europe for a greater stake in nuclear affairs.

Bonn quietly expressed its case for a role in nuclear policy at the end of the 1950s, owing to Germany's reemergence as the dominant economic power in Europe. However, the mere mention of German association with nuclear weapons ignited intense opposition within NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Fifteen years earlier, they had ended the second major war started by the Germans in the twentieth century and neither the East nor the West trusted Germany with nuclear weapons. They regarded the possibility of German association with nuclear weapons as unacceptable. The United States feared the possibility as well and made preventing it a top foreign policy priority. The situation was

complicated by West Germany's growing economic power in Europe. Washington feared that frustrating German aspirations would alienate Bonn whereas the United States sought a solution that would bind them more closely to the Atlantic partnership.

The introduction of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) necessitated a change in policy as well. The Soviet launched Sputnik in 1957, thus demonstrating their ability to build a rocket, armed with a nuclear warhead, capable of reaching the United States; the United States acquired this same capability several months later. The deployment of ICBMs meant that nuclear warfighting strategy had to be redefined. Prior to this development, the United States remained out of reach of Soviet nuclear weapons, but with ICBMs, the battlefield was enlarged beyond Europe to include American home territory. The NATO powers of Europe worried that the United States, newly vulnerable to a Soviet missile attack, might not, in a crisis, honor their treaty commitment. They questioned whether the United States would risk a nuclear strike on its own soil to come to Europe's aid. Some NATO members advocated national deterrents instead as a guarantee of protection against Soviet aggression.

The Supreme Allied Commander Europe's (SACEUR) demand for medium range ballistic missiles (MRBMs) on the European continent in 1957 fueled the dilemma. The Soviet stockpile of MRBMs aimed at Western Europe alarmed SACEUR who wanted NATO-based MRBMs to counterbalance the Russian threat. NATO deployed tactical, battlefield nuclear weapons to Europe with American warheads in 1957 under a "two-key system:" the European allies "owned" the missiles on their territory and the United States retained custody of the nearby warheads. If the United States and the host country agreed

to fire the weapon, then the Americans were to turn over custody of the warhead, the warhead would be placed in the missile, and the missile, fired. However, the United States resisted the notion of placing strategic MRBMs under this same regime, and so some searched for a way to satisfy SACEUR's demand without basing MRBMs in Europe.

The United States understood that the dilemma required prompt changes. "In Washington a feeling arose that the United States should devise a solution of its own before the demand got out of control," explained historian Arthur Schlesinger, a Kennedy aide.[2] And Washington also realized that a reorganization would affect American security. The United States was tied militarily with Europe through the NATO Alliance which pledged American assistance to Europe in a conflict. Therefore, Washington wanted changes which encouraged nuclear responsibility. It was essential that any modifications not conflict with American nuclear warfighting strategy which increasingly stressed control over all the nuclear weapons involved in the conflict. Thus, the Americans sought a plan which still gave them appreciable command over the Alliance's weapons. Finally, they wanted to discourage the spread of additional independent national deterrents which they viewed as a threat to peace and stability, a waste of Allied resources on redundant weapon systems, and a hindrance to a detente based on arms control between East and West.

There were many options. Washington might do nothing in the hope that it could prevent the continued spread of national nuclear forces. However, the Americans understood that the negative consequences of that path would be significant to all the members of NATO. Most American strategists agreed with political consultant Robert

Bowie's assessment that "the United States has no prospect of retaining a monopoly of the control of nuclear weapons."[3] The United States might help NATO erect a thoroughly European nuclear force, but this would require a level of political unity the allies had yet to achieve. Finally, they considered establishing some sort of combined American-European nuclear defense force which would still provide the United States effective control of the nuclear weapons.

The Eisenhower Administration embraced the combined defense concept. Its solution was the Multilateral Force (MLF); a plan to form a multinational fleet of ships, armed with missiles bearing nuclear weapons and operating under NATO command. The United States envisioned MLF as a force of twenty-five surface ships which were to cruise around the waters of Europe ready to launch a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union. The MLF scheme employed ships that were multinationally manned and comprised a fleet that was jointly owned by the countries participating in the force. The fleet would fire its missiles following a unanimous vote from its members.

Secretary of State Christian Herter introduced the MLF concept to NATO in December 1960, and the proposal became a major foreign policy initiative of three successive presidents. The Eisenhower Administration proposed this scheme in 1960; the Kennedy Administration advanced it vigorously; and President Lyndon B. Johnson allowed it to die in 1965. It was debated back and forth within NATO throughout its five year lifespan with inconsistent efforts by the United States to move it forward. Ironically, Washington, despite its position as the leader of NATO, never reached an agreement on the MLF from its allies.

The MLF affair offers insight into the structure of Alliance. The inner-workings of the Alliance can be observed by following the MLF from its inception in 1960 to its death in 1965. The MLF was a peculiar scheme conceived by Washington bureaucrats as a solution to the nuclear problems confronting NATO. On paper, the MLF appeared to be a reasonable solution to a serious problem; in practice, it was overly complex and impractical. Many of the NATO powers realized this truth and, through negotiations, convinced the United States to drop the proposal. The entire MLF event demonstrated the health of NATO; the smaller countries were not afraid to stand up to the leader, the United States did not force its allies to comply, the Americans arranged and promoted open forums of discussion, and the leader willingly set aside the proposal when it was clear that its allies did not want it.[4]

Historians characterize MLF as a foolhardy event in which the United States proposed an irrational military plan to give its NATO allies the perception of increased participation in nuclear affairs, while at the same time, maintaining America's control over the Allied deterrent.[5] "The episode demonstrated that American officials were unwilling to share real control over the nuclear deterrent," summarized historian Frank Costigliola.[6] However, these same historians have often neglected the good health of the Alliance that was demonstrated by the MLF: the European members of NATO successfully opposed an initiative by the Alliance's leader and the Atlantic partnership was able to set aside their differences following the end of MLF and move on to other issues requiring NATO's attention. The MLF's acceptance would have been a greater cause for concern than its defeat; it would have required America forcibly pushing the plan on unwilling allies. The

MLF's example of the healthy workings of the Alliance should not be overlooked when criticizing the plan for its many faults.

For five years, many Allied leaders saw the MLF plan as the best possible solution to NATO's "nuclear dilemma." It was a major public issue receiving significant attention and provoking widespread debate. However, few scholars have studied the MLF. Those extant accounts are mostly parts of much larger studies on NATO and nuclear strategy. Most of these works devote only a couple of pages to summarize the major elements of a proposal which occupied the Alliance's attention for the first half of the 1960s. A few accounts provide somewhat more articulated explanations of the MLF, but the topic previously lacked a detailed history -- based on hitherto classified documents -- of the course of events from its inception in 1960 to its demise in 1965. Although historians have characterized the promontories of the brief life of the MLF, this study represents the first description, *based wholly on primary sources,* of the international diplomacy attending its consideration by NATO. Indeed, this goes beyond the concise summaries previously published to present a more detailed and documented account of the debate over the MLF. One reason for the small number of accounts may be the lack of access to relevant official records on nuclear policy; the American and British Governments only began to declassify documents for this period in 1994 and 1991 respectively. Such as it is, therefore, the historiography of the MLF lacks solid grounding in archival documentation. As a result, this is the first study to be informed by research in British collections cited at the Public Records Office in London and recently opened American files at the National Archives.

Chapter Two

The idea of a NATO medium range ballistic missile (MRBM) force fathered the multilateral force concept. This idea first emerged in the late 1950's. Air Force General Lauris Norstad, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), suggested the possibility in 1957 of making NATO the fourth nuclear power by placing atomic weapons at its disposal, convinced as he was that having nuclear weapons at the immediate disposal of the Alliance was the most efficient means of defending the continent against Soviet aggression. In 1960, Norstad refined his idea into a MRBM force that would operate on the European continent and fall under NATO command and control. He stressed the need for silo-based MRBMs stationed throughout Europe as a way of providing him the necessary firepower to fight off a Soviet attack against Western Europe. The NATO powers listened politely, agreed with his reasoning, but failed to take action owing to significant resistance within the Alliance to stationing MRBMs bearing nuclear warheads on European soil.

The plan to establish a MRBM force gained new momentum in March 1960, when W. Randolph Burgess, the American representative to the North Atlantic Council (NAC), proposed that a nuclear force be created within NATO. Unlike Norstad's scheme, Burgess's purpose was to draw the independent, national nuclear deterrent arms of Great Britain and France under NATO control. That April, State Department officials shaped the idea into an apparently workable outline providing for a seagoing fleet comprised of U.S. Navy submarines armed with new Polaris medium range ballistic missiles and owned by all the NATO powers. Once hatched in the State Department, the scheme progressed

to the Department of Defense for review. In June, Gerard Smith, Assistant Secretary of State for Policy and Planning, suggested that the ships be manned by multinational crews. "Certainly the units could be of mixed nationality," he maintained.[1] This added substance to the notion of multilateral ownership.

The State Department quietly examined the NATO MRBM force throughout the summer months of 1960. On 2 August, Air Force General Nathan Twining, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, gave the force greater identity by proposing that the initial force be composed of five submarines. Norstad, whose original plan envisioned a wholly land based force, agreed that, "from the military point of view, a seaborne deployment of MRBMs offers certain advantages for some part of our proposed force."[2] Norstad realized the practicality and usefulness of a seagoing force. The MRBM concept gained more purchase late that summer when several NATO capitals expressed their discontent with the United States' current monopoly over nuclear strategy and planning. State now saw the MRBM scheme as a means of quelling this discontent by using the multinational manning of this force to give their NATO Allies a larger role in the Alliance's nuclear defense.

A NATO MRBM force received additional attention in mid-August 1960 with the submission to Secretary of State Christian Herter of a report by Harvard professor Robert Bowie entitled "The North Atlantic Nations: Tasks for the 1960s." Commonly called the Bowie Report, it examined the upcoming challenges that NATO would face in the next decade. It was initiated by Herter, prodded by Gerard Smith, who feared that Norstad might succeed in acquiring a land-based MRBM force which Smith viewed as vulnerable

to national seizure or possible proliferation. Aided by experts from both government and academia, Bowie's report, submitted on 21 August 1960, identified two elements of NATO's nuclear dilemma. First, technology changed the "strategic environment" from one in which the United States was impervious to a Soviet nuclear strike to one in which the Soviet Union was capable of reaching America with ICBMs.[3] This Soviet potential reduced the credibility of the American pledge to use nuclear weapons in the defense of NATO. Second, the economic revival of Europe and the push towards unity increased the hope of the Allies for greater status by playing in the nuclear arena. Bowie concluded that there was a need for the Western Europeans to have some control over their own nuclear defense while at the same time preventing the spread of additional national nuclear programs. His solution was "a multinational submarine missile force under common financing and ownership and with mixed crews," or the MLF.[4]

Although it was unknown whether Bowie realized that a similar proposal was making its way through the bureaucracy of the State Department, history has credited Bowie with the plan because his was the first to receive high-level attention. On 16 August, Bowie explained his proposal to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who met with Bowie and Norstad on the morning of 12 September and discussed the concept's feasibility. General Norstad supported Bowie's scheme because it embodied his plan for NATO to become a nuclear power. Bowie told Eisenhower that, although Polaris was still a year or two from being ready for deployment on submarines, the President needed to "lay a program out now."[5] Following this meeting, Bowie drew up a proposal for Eisenhower which called for a force of five submarines to be provided by the United

States which would have the ability to fire upon an order from SACEUR, by direction of a unanimous vote from the NAC, or by authorization from the United States.

Eisenhower's support of the missile fleet proposal forced the resolution of an ongoing contest between Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates and Secretary of State Christian Herter. Gates endorsed the plan for a NATO nuclear force, but he disagreed strongly with the concepts of multilateralism and multinational manning. Conversely, Herter supported both the concept of the force and the idea of complete multinational integration of the crews. The president instructed both men to compose position papers to defend their stances. In a 3 October meeting, Eisenhower listened to the arguments of both sides before deciding to go forward with a plan for a submarine missile fleet under multilateral ownership and multinational manning. The President pushed the proposal forward "on an urgent basis," so that it might be presented to NATO before the end of his administration in January 1961.[6]

Following this meeting, the president began a more intense effort of circulating the proposal to the necessary individuals for comments and recommendations. On the afternoon of 3 October, Undersecretary of State Douglas Dillon explained the Bowie plan to Paul Henri Spaak, the Belgian Secretary-General of NATO. Spaak doubted the feasibility of such a scheme, specifically the issues of NATO controlled nuclear weapons and the unanimous firing formula to launch the weapons. The Joint Chiefs of Staff argued that multinational manning was impractical and that joint ownership would make managing the force difficult and the firing decision complicated. Instead, the Chiefs proposed establishing a force composed of national NATO nuclear forces and placed

under Alliance control. Eisenhower understood these objections, apparently rejected them, and reiterated his support for Bowie's scheme and the unanimous firing regime.

Bowie's proposal hit a hurdle in November 1960 when his plans for launching authorization attracted criticism. As Gates pointed out, passing the authority to fire American nuclear weapons to an international body required the approval of Congress, which was extremely protective of America's nuclear monopoly. Herter, who had previously argued for SACEUR's authority to fire the weapons, conceded that the missiles could only be fired with American approval. "Our hands were somewhat tied," Eisenhower recalled, "because the Joint Committee of Congress dealing with atomic matters was formed and is operating under a law that was written at a time when we had a true monopoly of atomic manufacture."[7] Nonetheless, Gates realized Eisenhower's wish to move quickly in proposing the force and he suggested introducing the plan at the December NATO Ministerial Meeting. Herter objected on the grounds that it was unwise to promise American backing for the scheme shortly before a new Democratic administration took office. However, on the 16th, Gates finally convinced Herter to present the plan for a multilaterally owned and controlled missile fleet to NATO at its annual meeting scheduled for December in Ottawa. Herter prepared a draft statement for the NATO ministerial meeting and gave copies to Gates and the National Security Council.

Laying the groundwork for this presentation, Dillon and Assistant Secretary of Defense John Irwin briefed the governments of Britain, France, and Germany about the upcoming proposal. In his speech on 16 December in Ottawa, Herter introduced "a

logical extension and development of the consideration which NATO has been giving to this whole ballistic missile question since 1957."[8] Herter pledged an American contribution by the end of 1963 of five Polaris-bearing submarines to a seagoing MRBM force under NATO control that "would be truly multilateral, with multilateral ownership, financing and control, and would include mixed manning to the extent considered operationally feasible by SACEUR."[9] However, Herter added a vague clause to this offer conditioning the American commitment on a European contribution. The Secretary of State announced that "in taking this step, we would expect that other members of NATO would be prepared to contribute approximately 100 missiles to meet SACEUR's MRBM requirement through 1964, under the multilateral concept which I have already indicated."[10]

NATO's half-hearted response to the proposal disappointed Eisenhower. The Europeans approved of the scheme, but the condition of the American contribution confused them. Furthermore, they delayed any serious discussion on the topic until they saw the position of the new Administration under John F. Kennedy. The Americans did not object since, as Herter explained, they never expected an immediate response. "We have never anticipated that any firm decisions should be made at this time, or that any firm decisions could be made. We merely laid this on the table in connection with the 10-year planning as something to be given consideration."[11] NATO was interested in the idea nonetheless and instructed the North Atlantic Council to examine and study the feasibility of the proposal.

The missile fleet scheme worried France and Great Britain. They knew that the

force had been designed, in part, to absorb their countries' independent deterrents. The Americans saw stopping the spread of national nuclear forces as one of the key aims of the proposal. The possibility of consolidating the nuclear forces of Europe attracted the Americans because it allowed the weapons to be more easily controlled in a time of conflict. Control of the nuclear weapons was essential if the United States hoped to implement a nuclear warfighting strategy of gradual escalation. A NATO nuclear force meant that the United States would only have to coordinate its nuclear actions with one other governing body rather than with the two other countries which presently possessed nuclear weapons, and possibly more in the near future. As Kennedy asked, "how does that produce security when you have ten, twenty, thirty nuclear powers who may fire their weapons off under different conditions?"[12]

France was not enthusiastic about the seaborne missile fleet from the outset. French President Charles de Gaulle, already skeptical of American domination of NATO, saw this missile fleet as an American attempt to abort the French nuclear program and exert American hegemony over Western Europe. Committed to his belief in the destiny of France, de Gaulle detested Washington's attempts at imposing its will on Paris based on America's nuclear position. De Gaulle refused to submit France's developing nuclear deterrent to the mercy of American ambitions or the well-being of NATO. His resistance to a multinational missile fleet was immediate and he maintained his opposition throughout its consideration, and this proved a major hurdle to any meaningful agreement. As Philip Zulueta, Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, explained, de Gaulle had a "passionate belief in the destiny of France", an "indomitable will", and he "constantly asserts that

France is a great power."[13] De Gaulle viewed NATO as nothing more than "a system of security whereby Washington controlled the defense and consequently the foreign policy and even the territory of its allies."[14] The French President sought French power and prestige worldwide and viewed nuclear weapons as an absolute prerequisite to this end. In light of these goals, his opposition should have been a foregone conclusion. De Gaulle would never contemplate an agreement which would rob France of her international status as a world power and instead made her dependent on NATO and the United States for her nuclear protection.

Britain questioned the need for and usefulness of such a force almost immediately. They saw problems with how the force would be controlled, the practicality of mixed-manning, its cost, and the politics of dissemination. Dissemination resulted from the transfer of nuclear weapons technology from a nuclear power to a non-nuclear power. And, foremost, British Government was doubtful of France's willingness to give up her nuclear program in favor of the American proposal. Indeed, Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh, Deputy Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, viewed the French nuclear program as the "root cause" of the American plan.[15] However, the deterrent of the West remaining effective and America staying committed to the defense of Europe were the important issues in the British minds, and a multilateral force offered an attractive guarantee. Should Britain's concerns be satisfied, "we should not oppose it."[16] Nevertheless, Shuckburgh urged caution. "I do not think that there is any 'political prize' to be had which would justify accepting a multilateral plan which we consider to be unrealistic," he concluded.[17]

The American scheme also affected British domestic issues. Specifically, it

precipitated a debate over the future of the country's independent deterrent. She enjoyed a special position as a result of her nuclear capability, but many officials believed that its advantages were diminishing.[18] They pointed to several trends including the fact that they were becoming increasingly dependent on American delivery systems, that Washington's ongoing Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) program made Britain's closer proximity and V-bomber force marginal, and that France's nuclear program meant that Britain was no longer the unique third nuclear power. British officials also realized that the American strategic nuclear inventory adequately protected the United Kingdom against the Soviets. "On purely military grounds, and assuming continued cohesion between the United States and the United Kingdom," contended Sir Norman Brook, Secretary of the Cabinet, "there is no great need for an independent British contribution to the strategic nuclear deterrent of the West."[19] And, within NATO, opposition was increasing to independent nuclear programs, particularly among the smaller allies and among opposition Socialist parties of the larger powers, and this placed the future of such forces in doubt. "If there are prizes to win," Brooke suggested, "we stand a better chance of winning them by taking an early initiative than by acquiescing later under pressure."[20]

The cost of participating in the multilateral nuclear force raised additional concerns. The United Kingdom was faced with a relatively declining GNP, increasing defense estimates dedicated to longstanding Commonwealth and NATO military obligations, and demands from Washington and Bonn for additional conventional army and air forces in Europe. Watkinson concluded that "it is imperative that we look for reductions."[21] Whitehall was already looking to reduce defense estimates before Herter

proposed the multilateral MRBM force, and funding both the earlier commitments and this new contribution to the NATO nuclear force was considered illogical.

John F. Kennedy assumed the Presidency on 20 January 1961 and quickly established his own foreign policy.[22] The nuclear dilemma in NATO and Eisenhower's proposed missile fleet confronted him almost immediately, but Kennedy remained surprisingly silent on his intentions during the first months of his Administration. Kennedy discussed the nuclear concerns confronting the Alliance in his 13 April meeting with German Chancellor Konrad Ardenauer. During their conversation, Ardenauer admitted that there were risks with each possible solution for the MRBM problem, but he also acknowledged that something had to be done. Kennedy expressed similar sentiments and informed Ardenauer that Dean Acheson, the former Secretary of State and presidential troubleshooter, had studied Herter's force proposal and concluded that the sea-based idea seemed much better than any land-based solution. Kennedy revealed that the force's control structure was of the greatest concern for the United States at that time, but that he anticipated a firm government position in the near future.

Kennedy unveiled a favorable decision towards the NATO missile fleet in a May 1961 speech to the Canadian parliament in Ottawa. The President announced that the United States anticipated "the possibility of eventually establishing a NATO seaborne force, which would be truly multilateral in ownership and control, if the Allies found it necessary and useful, once NATO's non-nuclear goals have been achieved."[23] Although this was the commitment to the seaborne fleet that some in Europe had anticipated, the offer was once again given with a condition. The stipulation about meeting conventional

force goals dampened the excitement that an unconditional American offer might have stimulated. The Kennedy Administration made the decision to support the force, but the president's condition seemed so out of reach to the Europeans that the force offer generated little reaction.

The lack of European enthusiasm about the NATO nuclear force frustrated the Americans. Kennedy believed that the force was workable and useful, but he was unwilling to press the issue as a major foreign policy initiative if the rest of NATO did not want it. Instead, he left the offer open for the Western Europeans if they chose to pursue it. The NATO force initiative stalled in mid-1961 due to both Europe's silence and the president's resulting indifference. Neither side was willing to take the lead in negotiating the formation of the force.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara made speeches at the end of 1961 aimed at reinvigorating European interest in the MLF. Rusk affirmed at a press conference on 18 November that Kennedy's offer of May was still open. Rusk followed this statement with a similar one at the NATO Ministerial meeting in Ottawa on 14 December in which he announced, "the declaration of President Kennedy at Ottawa still stands: if there are NATO members who believe that there are advantages in moving ahead on this now we shall be glad to discuss this point with them."[24] McNamara addressed NATO the following day promising American willingness to pursue the founding of a multilateral missile fleet and vowing that the United States would only commit MRBMs to Europe in the form of a NATO nuclear force.

The European members of NATO insisted on MRBMs stationed on the continent

as protection against a Soviet attack, and Washington's position convinced them that a seaborne NATO nuclear force offered them their best opportunity at acquiring these weapons. They wanted the MRBMs, but several aspects of the American scheme concerned them. The missile fleet raised questions about nuclear strategy, nuclear dissemination, detente, and deterrence, and each issue had to be addessed before the Alliance would proceed. Rusk acknowledged the complexity of the issues confronting a NATO nuclear force: "The political and military management of a nuclear force in the hands of 15 or 16 nations, itself, is a political and a military problem of the highest order of difficulty."[25]

The countries of Western Europe understood that the Alliance was in a time of transition. The original design and strategies of the organization no longer matched the current global situation and the threats that it presented. As British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan told Kennedy, "Great changes have taken place in the world since NATO was first established 12 years ago and its organization needs to be remodeled to match the needs of the present situation."[26] Britain and the other European allies had long been uneasy with the Eisenhower administration's strategy of Massive Retaliation and welcomed any step toward a richer mix of strategic options. For instance, British Minister of Defense Harold Watkinson asserted that "there is no NATO concept of limited war with the Soviets."[27] NATO was in the process of examining its strategies but Europe questioned whether a mixed-manned NATO nuclear force would fit into a new strategy that might emerge. The British envisioned the force as a vehicle to develop a clear NATO strategy that reflected current military thinking. Watkinson urged NATO to examine the

multilateral proposal and its usefulness in this review of strategy. Whitehall opposed committing Britain militarily or financially to a force inconsistent with the Organization's overall strategy. "The time had come," argued Foreign Secretary Sir Alec Douglas-Home, "when there should be a comprehensive study of purposes, control and deployment of the nuclear armory in support of NATO" so as to create a "deterrent as effective as possible without waste of resources."[28]

Some Europeans questioned the compatibility of a multilaterally owned nuclear force with the worldwide movement against nuclear dissemination. The Americans defended their proposal by pointing to the firing formula which gave each member a veto over launching the force's missiles. Washington argued that the force would not contribute to dissemination since the United States must still authorize the firing of the force. In effect, the missile fleet was doing nothing more than increasing the number of fingers on the safety catch. The unanimous voting formula satisfied the worries of some Europeans, but others wanted assurance that the missiles could not be seized by a lone nation. They feared that a national contingent aboard a vessel might gain control of a ship in the fleet and capture the nuclear weapons on board. The United States dismissed the concern by explaining that the small percentages of each nationality and the coded firing mechanisms on each ship made such a situation nearly impossible.

The suggested unanimous voting formula raised questions regarding into the credibility of the force. The Russians believing that the weapons would be used quickly was essential if the force was going to deter Soviet aggression. Many Europeans inquired how a whole committee could reach a firing decision in a timely manner and how the force

would be reliable as a deterrent if the veto of one country could stop a launch,. "If political control was extended to the point where a veto by any one member country could prevent the use of nuclear arms," Watkinson noted, "the effectiveness of the deterrent would be significantly weakened."[29] Washington did not have an easy answer to these concerns except to promise that a timely voting mechanism would be devised and reasoning that in almost every circumstance conceivable, the Allies would be like-minded on the firing question.

The members of NATO also feared a multilateral fleet would damage the growing detente between the East and West. Moscow stridently opposed a multilateral force and accused NATO of shamelessly promoting nuclear dissemination. The Soviets pointed to the Irish Resolution ratified in the United Nations in 1961 "under which the nuclear States would undertake to refrain from relinquishing control of nuclear weapons...to States not possessing such weapons."[30] They claimed that since both the United States and Great Britain signed this resolution, it would be in violation for them to aid the formation of a multilateral force. The Americans and British claimed that it was not dissemination at all since both countries would retain vetoes on the force. Furthermore, Kenneth Simpson, Counselor at the British Embassy in Bonn, asserted that because "the Irish Resolution is a resolution of the General Assembly. It is therefore simply a recommendation" with "no binding force."[31] The question was never resolved and the force remained a point of contention obviously increasing the tensions between the two sides. Britain in particular encouraged the growing detente emerging in East-West relations and hoped that some sort of conventional force reduction agreement in Central Europe might soon be

negotiated. An agreement would lower the possibility of a conflict erupting and allow Great Britain to reduce her current forces stationed in Europe. Whitehall welcomed force reduction schemes as means of easing the burdens of a growing defense estimate. London was not alone in seeing the benefits of the increasing detente and some Europeans viewed it as a tempting reason to oppose the formation of a NATO missile fleet.

Washington renewed the initiative for the multilateral NATO missile fleet in early spring 1962. In a National Security Action Memoranda dated 18 April, Kennedy clarified American policy towards MRBMs. The theme of the message was that "the United States should indicate its willingness to join its allies, if they wish, in developing a modest sized fully multilateral NATO sea-based MRBM force."[32] In the memorandum, he detailed what the force should look like and how it should be controlled. Since he intended it as an answer to the demands of NATO's non-nuclear members, Kennedy cited European interest, centralized command, and joint participation as the most important aspects of the force. McNamara and Rusk considered this memorandum as approval for proceeding on a more aggressive campaign for the force. At a 5 May NATO Ministerial Meeting in Athens, the two secretaries once again offered the multilateral MRBM force to the other NATO members, but this time in more detailed terms. They stated that the United States would help NATO acquire MRBMs if the missiles would be committed to this force and "would be prepared to participate in serious and detailed consideration of this question in the Permanent Council as soon as possible after this meeting, and would outline our latest thinking about political, military, and technical aspects of the issue at that time."[33]

As part of the new campaign for the multilateral fleet within NATO, McNamara

initiated a study by the U.S. Navy into "the military, political, legal, and constitutional problems which the creation of ... a (multilateral) force would entail."[34] The Navy released it conclusion on 15 June that a multilateral force (MLF) was "technically feasible."[35] The investigation was led by Vice Admiral Claude V. Ricketts, who became a outspoken advocate of the MLF. Both the opinions of Ricketts and the conclusion of the Navy study proved valuable in the American promotion of the MLF scheme.

The North Atlantic Council became the location of the MLF debate in summer 1962. On 16 June Thomas Finletter, the American Ambassador to NATO, made his first official presentation of the MLF to the North Atlantic Council, where he vowed that the MLF was the only form in which the United States would contribute MRBMs to Europe. The idea proposal reemerged at a NATO defense policy meeting on 18 September when Belgium demanded a prompt NATO study on the creation of an MLF and Germany publicly pledged participating in such a force both in manpower and financially. In October, Finletter once again addressed the council regarding current nuclear problems and proposed solutions including the MLF.

The United States sent Gerard Smith and Admiral John Lee on a tour of NATO countries in October to capitalize on of the current discussion in the North Atlantic Council. The briefing team met with most NATO powers, excluding France, due to the hostility it had shown to the MLF proposal. In these meetings, Smith and Lee described a force that was intended to be multilaterally owned and operated, subject to a unanimous vote for firing, and composed of twenty-five surface ships each carrying 8 Polaris missiles. The team received only polite attention from the Allies, including Germany, who showed

only "reserved enthusiasm."[36]

Smith and Lee returned to Paris in November to present the findings of the Navy study to the North Atlantic Council. The 22 November briefing proved very influential in the minds of the Europeans as the Navy study demonstrated the seriousness that the Americans placed on the MLF proposal. Following the meeting, several representatives expressed interest in hearing additional information about the MLF from what had been mentioned in the October rounds. Smith and Lee responded to this interest by conducting another tour of European capitals in early December 1962. The team presented in Rome and Bonn on 3 and 4 December, respectively, but did not stop in London because the British Government saw no need for further technical briefing on the MLF. Realistically, London's pass on the briefing was most likely due to the negotiations that had begun that fall on British entrance into the EEC. British officials were wisely sensitive to the impact that multilateral negotiations would have on de Gaulle, who now openly opposed such a force. Sir David Ormsby-Gore, the ambassador to the United States, pleaded with his government "Could not...matters as the multilateral MRBM and the reform of the NATO structure be left until we had completed our negotiations with the Six."[37]

In London, the debate over a multilateral force left the British Government balancing its desired role in the Atlantic community led by the United States and its required participation in a reemerging postwar Europe led by France. Paris' position resulted from her leading role in the European Economic Community (Common Market). Whitehall correctly understood that France might veto British admission to the Common Market and was therefore peculiarly sensitive at the moment to the Anglo-French

relationship. President Charles de Gaulle, who viewed NATO as "an inadequate guarantee of the security of the Free World or indeed of France itself," was unwilling to give up his independent nuclear program in order to subordinate France's defense to a force led by the United States, a nation he had reason to distrust.[38] France detonated a crude nuclear device in 1960 and, although several more years of costly research passed before a weapon was ready, de Gaulle preferred having the French defense wholly under national control. He envisioned a nuclear deterrent force of European counties which France and the United Kingdom could lead free of American influence. But, as Philip Zulueta, Private Secretary for the Prime Minister, asserted, "de Gaulle realises that he cannot have his empire on a world scale without Britain and he wants us to choose Europe."[39] Whitehall opposed a purely European deterrent, but was nonetheless trapped between its special relationship with the United States and its hope to enter the Common Market, knowing that favoring one might doom the other.

The slow progression of the MLF proposal accelerated in December 1962. A crisis at the end of 1962 surrounding the future of the British deterrent brought the possibility of a NATO MRBM force back to the forefront. Britain possessed strategic nuclear weapons technology, but relied entirely on the Royal Air Force squadrons of "V"-bombers for delivery. By 1960, new Soviet air defense radars and surface-to-air missiles increased the vulnerability of manned bombers and correspondingly lessened Britain's deterrent. As a counter, in 1953 the Air Ministry started work on the Blue Streak, an Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM), a move intended to result in the creation of a silo-based missile deterrent. The Ministry of Defense envisioned it as the eventual

replacement for the "V"-bombers as the nation's primary deterrent around the turn of the decade. Problems emerged in 1960 when researchers discovered that Blue Streak was vulnerable to a preemptive Soviet strike. Whitehall faced the difficult choice of spending more to improve a questionable program already over its budget, or to cancel it. The Cabinet's Defense Committee abandoned Blue Streak on 24 February 1960, but this left Britain with no future deterrent.

Macmillan reacted by arranging with Eisenhower in 1960 to purchase Skybolt air-launched medium range ballistic missiles from the United States. Although given a choice between Skybolt and Polaris, Macmillan chose Skybolt because of its adaptability to the British V-bomber force. The President agreed to the sale with the understanding that the Royal Navy would allow U.S. Navy reactor-driven, Polaris bearing submarines to use its submarine base at Holy Loch, Scotland. The Atlantic Fleet needed this base to mount war patrols off Northern Norway within missile range of Leningrad and Murmansk. Whitehall now envisioned Skybolt, along with the already developed Blue Steel stand-off missiles, as the backbone of the island's defense for the following ten years.[40] "With the V-bombers, Blue Steel and Skybolt our forces will be effective throughout the 1960s," the prime minister proclaimed.[41] The development of Skybolt was nearly complete in mid-1962 when evidence mounted that the missile could not meet specifications. Always a marginal feature of the American inventory, Skybolt's future now was in doubt.

Skybolt's future grew dim in the summer of 1962. McNamara doubted Skybolt's future after it failed its first several test flights. Seeking advice, the secretary of defense ordered two studies to be done on the missile by assistants, one by Harold Brown and one

by Charles Hitch. Both of these studies returned with recommendations to cancel Skybolt. In a 24 August meeting with Hitch, McNamara made the decision to end the program, but delayed an official announcement until November in hopes of diffusing the cancellation's impact. However, British Minister of Defense Peter Thorneycroft was not told of the cancellation during his September trip to Washington. McNamara did not even inform Kennedy and Rusk of his decision until 7 November, after he received an inquiry from a suspecting Thorneycroft. The secretary of defense defended his recommendation to end the program by explaining that "skybolt was too expensive, was redundant as a weapons system because of the development of new Polaris and Minuteman missiles, and had failed its test flights."[42] When Kennedy and Rusk questioned him about the British reaction, the secretary of defense replied, "I'll take care of it."[43] However, McNamara did nothing more than call Thorneycroft and tell him that there was a possibility of Skybolt being canceled. In fact, McNamara intended to have it officially completed by 23 November. Before ending the conversation, McNamara promised to come to London for a discussion before any final decision was made. Thorneycroft informed Macmillan of the situation, but the prime minister gave it little attention due to his recollection of similar points previously encountered in the Skybolt program. Thorneycroft and Macmillan failed to grasp McNamara's true position on the issue and thus did not view the situation as urgent. McNamara traveled to London on 11 December to discuss future options for the British deterrent in light of Skybolt's demise. Unexplainedly, the secretary of defense broke the news at an airport press conference upon arriving which left Thorneycroft "profoundly shocked."[44] Rusk describes the cancellation as hitting "like a thunderclap in London."[45]

The news sent the British Government reeling; the country's future deterrent had just vanished. These developments alarmed the unsuspecting Macmillan and he made it the major issue of his December 1962 Nassau talks with Kennedy.

Macmillan entered these negotiations on 19 December realizing that the future of Britain's nuclear deterrent hung in the balance. Absent Skybolt, he had to return home with an arrangement for an American delivery system. Macmillan initially sought to save Skybolt, but Kennedy now made clear that he was no longer interested in continuing its development owing to its high cost and inferior performance as compared to the Polaris and new Minuteman silo-based, intercontinental strategic missiles. In a gesture of goodwill, Kennedy offered to split the cost of further development of the Skybolt program if the British were still determined to deploy it or, as an alternative, to provide the Royal Air Force with the Hound Dog, a jet-powered cruise missile. Macmillan shied away from these offers. Rusk asserts that "it soon became apparent to the British that Skybolt wouldn't work and they had to find another weapons system."[46] Instead, Macmillan "raised the possibility that the United States might provide the United Kingdom with the Polaris missile," claiming that U.S. Navy submarines were basing at Holy Loch under an agreement that provided for Britain's acquisition of Skybolt.[47] Because Washington would not fulfill its part of that bargain, London had the right to insist on an equivalent substitute. Kennedy was hesitant at first, owing to the objection of the State Department who saw it as contradictory to modernize an independent nuclear force at the very time when they were trying to consolidate national deterrents into the MLF. However he soon agreed to the Polaris sale with the proviso that the British Polaris-bearing force be

committed to a NATO nuclear force and that Her Majesty's Government agree to participate in the forming of a NATO multilateral force. This was agreeable to Macmillan, but he insisted that British forces might be withdrawn whenever Her Majesty's Government deemed that its "supreme national interests" were at stake.[48] The President and Prime Minister published a joint statement to this effect prior to adjourning the on the afternoon of 20 December.

The United States used the British need for a delivery system to again place the multilateral force back onto the Atlantic community's agenda. Close examination of the Nassau Agreement revealed that the two countries agreed to the formation of two different nuclear forces. The first force, suggested by the Prime Minister and contained in paragraph 6, offered the opportunity for each power in the Alliance to subscribe some fraction of their extant conventional forces to a new nuclear force under NATO command to which Britain would plan to commit her bomber command and the new Polaris bearing submarines. Kennedy advocated the second force, elaborated in paragraph 8, which would be multilateral and composed of manpower and financial contributions from the willing participants in NATO.[49] Both the paragraph 6 and the paragraph 8 forces were to fall under NATO command and be targeted in accordance with NATO plans. The main differences between the two forces involved platforms used and manning. Macmillan intended his multinational force to be composed of American Strategic Forces and Britain's Bomber Command and Polaris bearing submarines, with each nation manning its own platforms. His paragraph 6 force was to be composed of existing platforms, sea or land-based, and no mixed manning was involved. The use of existing platforms appealed

to Macmillan because it required no extra expenditure.

Kennedy pictured his paragraph 8 force as multilateral, and seagoing, with mixed-manning. British officials visualized the Agreement coming into effect in "two phases:" the first, an immediate move toward creating the paragraph 6 force, and the second, the forming of the paragraph 8 force several years later.[50] They questioned the wisdom of Kennedy's multilateral concept, and agreed with Counsellor Peter Ramsbotham's prediction that "it would be many years before the force would come into existence and plenty of time therefore for discussion."[51]

Great Britain and the United States anticipated that the forces set up under the Nassau Agreement would bring added cohesion to the Alliance. However, they were worried that the decisions reached at Nassau would appear as a case of the United States and Great Britain dictating the strategy and arrangement of NATO forces. Weary of this charge, Kennedy decided to offer Polaris missiles to de Gaulle under the same conditions prescribed for the Brits; submitting them to a NATO nuclear force and a commitment to participate in the forming of a multilateral force. The President also hoped that this offer would prevent de Gaulle from further souring over another apparent example of the special relationship shared by the United States and Great Britain on nuclear matters. The French president received the offer and promised to consider it carefully before making any decisions. However, it would only take de Gaulle a few weeks to make his decision.

The Nassau Agreement reinvigorated the American drive for the MLF. Both London and Washington achieved their aims at the conference; the British obtained a nuclear delivery system to modernize their deterrent and the Americans preserved their

healthy relationship with Great Britain and obtained London's commitment to participate in the formation of a multilateral force that would include all of the willing participants of NATO. The British were not optimistic about the prospects of a multilateral force and hoped that time would destroy the American enthusiasm for the proposal, but on the contrary, the Nassau Agreement gave the MLF its second life and the United States eagerly pushed it forward.

Chapter Three

The Nassau Agreement represented much more than a deal on delivery systems; it was "an agreement on future nuclear policy."[1] This arrangement embodied a shift of Western deterrence away from nuclear independence and towards interdependence. As London's Representative to the North Atlantic Council, Evelyn Shuckburgh, observed, both delegations at Nassau sought "to improve the cohesion of the Alliance by developing European participation in nuclear planning."[2] The British, like the Americans, sensed the need for more centralized control of the West's growing nuclear inventory as well as an answer to demands by NATO's non-nuclear members for a greater role in the Alliance's nuclear strategy and planning. Macmillan was convinced that his paragraph 6 force, to which all the members of NATO might contribute freely, offered the best solution to both of these concerns. "The two governments tried to put forward proposals that would encourage the development of arrangements under which any interested member nation of NATO - whether or not it possessed nuclear weapons - would be able to play an active and significant role in manning, equipping, and controlling a nuclear force devoted entirely to the purposes of the Alliance," Ormsby-Gore explained.[3]

The Kennedy Administration praised the Nassau Agreement in the months following the December summit. Kennedy supposed that he fulfilled the goals set forth for the summit "to meet our obligations to the British, Skybolt having failed, and also contribute together to the strengthening of NATO."[4] The commitment he received for the establishment of a multilateral force thrilled him the most however. He viewed the MLF as an excellent tool for increasing the solidarity and cohesion of the Alliance. "The whole

emphasis of Nassau was on strengthening NATO and the NATO commitment," Kennedy explained.[5] The Americans attempted to disregard Macmillan's paragraph 6 force and instead looked forward to the time when the paragraph 8 force would be formed. Washington was particularly excited about the new MRBMs that would now be deployed to Western Europe and the opportunity that this new force offered to the Federal Republic of Germany to participate in nuclear affairs.

Some political circles in Washington harshly criticized the Nassau Agreement. This negative reaction was most evident among the strategic think tanks that contemplated nuclear strategy and planning. "Nassau indicates the gradual erosion of American policy on the control of nuclear weapons without any clear policy alternative emerging," complained political consultant Robert Osgood who identified three political blunders Kennedy committed at Nassau.[6] First, the agreement transformed NATO into a nuclear power, thus increasing the complexity of Allied cooperation on nuclear targeting and firing. Second, Kennedy shifted the priority from a conventional force build-up in Europe to the establishment of a multilateral force. Finally, the United States was forced to offer the same terms to France so as to communicate fairness and equality. The offer of Polaris missiles to both Britain and France seemed to encourage independent deterrents rather than restrict them. Washington realized these drawbacks, but believed that the additional strength and cohesion brought to NATO by the MLF outweighed them.

Releasing the Nassau Agreement in Britain ignited a spirited public reaction. On the one hand, the opposition Labour Party, tied closely to the international Socialist community, favored disarmament and opposed measures to increase or enhance the British

nuclear deterrent. On the other hand, many Tories believed that their Prime Minister was giving away their country's nuclear independence by committing it to a NATO force. In their minds, Macmillan subjugated the force to NATO and this left the islands with no credible defense of their own. "I am being violently attacked ... for having sold out British interests," Macmillan told Kennedy within days of the Nassau Conference.[7] Some Tories understood the situation to be one in which London had relied on the United States for Skybolt as a way of extending the life of the British deterrent only to watch the Americans nonchalantly cancel it with little regard for London's needs. Englishmen were dumbfounded that Whitehall was once again relying on Washington to save their deterrent. As Tory operative Edward Martell explained to Edward Heath, Lord Privy Seal and the Conservative Leader of the House of Commons, "Nothing else can alter the fact that Polaris can be withdrawn from us as easily as Skybolt has been."[8] Public opinion was clearly concerned about Britain's growing dependence on the United States for her defense. "This country has never before been dependent on its initial defense on another country - especially one that was three years late in the 1st War, and two years late in the second," complained an angry Tory.[9] Labor leader Harold Wilson, a crafty politician, recalled that, "On no policy issue was Macmillan to be so politically embarrassed."[10]

The Macmillan cabinet defended the accord. "There is no call for anyone to be aggrieved or dissatisfied with Nassau Agreement," declared Peter Thomas, the Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign Office.[11] Many cabinet ministers were relieved at the outcome at Nassau, viewing it as a victory rather than a defeat. They realized how close Britain had come to losing its deterrent altogether. Furthermore, these

officials understood that Skybolt's cancellation was "dictated by facts beyond anyone's control" and that Kennedy's offer to sell Polaris missiles to the Royal Navy was a true "gesture of generosity."[12] They recognized Polaris to be the best available deterrent system owing to the apparent invulnerability of reactor-driven submarines and the relative accuracy of the missiles. To complaints of being forced to lean too heavily on Washington for Britain's defense, Whitehall replied that the agreement "struck a balance between independence and interdependence."[13] In fact, London was not opposed to interdependence, believing that "it is an essential condition of our future strength and prosperity."[14] To accusations that Macmillan was trading away Britain's deterrent and all its privileges to NATO, Whitehall pointed to the escape clause which was open to wide interpretations. Finally, the government answered the most serious objections by explaining that a multilateral force was a distant, perhaps doubtful prospect.

The Germans quickly voiced their eagerness to participate in the MLF following the publication of the Nassau Agreement. The Federal Republic of Germany had hoped for a role in nuclear policy since the late 1950s, but there was strong opposition throughout Europe to German possessing nuclear weapons. Countries in the East and the West distrusted the Germans after two world wars and the governments reacted vehemently whenever an independent German deterrent was mentioned. The Americans understood this opinion, but thought that the Germans were determined to obtain at least a limited nuclear role. Bonn never proposed possessing nuclear weapons, but did want more influence and a part to play, somehow, in the nuclear defense of the Alliance. In many ways nuclear weapons were synonymous with international clout and prestige.

World War II had ended fifteen years earlier and Germany had since rebuilt itself into one of the world's leading economic powers. West Germany's economic strength and her important position in European politics, Bonn argued, meant that she could not forever be excluded from nuclear matters. Consequently, they were delighted by the announcement of the forming of a multilateral nuclear force with joint ownership and manning. Bonn saw the MLF as their best possible path to nuclear participation. The MLF attracted the Americans as well because it provided Germany a nuclear role without giving it an independent deterrent. Bowie explained that "such a force would enable the Federal Republic to have a proper part in the control of nuclear defense without raising the spectre of separate German strategic forces."[15] Indeed, Washington hoped that the MLF would satisfy not only the Germans but also other NATO allies who sought a greater role in nuclear affairs. British Foreign Office official C.C.C. Tickell perceived the German fondness of the MLF and soon after Nassau, predicted that "we may expect the Germans to do all they can to encourage the development of a truly multilateral NATO force as soon as possible."[16]

The Germans embraced the MLF quickly in part due to its guarantee of an American partnership. German Chancellor Konrad Ardenauer realized that a multilateral force agreement would tie the United States to the defense of Western Europe. Bonn was increasingly worried at the dawn of the new decade that current problems in NATO, new ICBM technology, and the growing detente between East and West might drive Washington back into the isolationalism that many European liberals believed characterized American foreign policy prior to World War II. Thus, Germans saw the

MLF as a tool to prevent a possible American withdrawal from Europe and instead establish a tie binding the United States to European affairs and committing her more closely to its defense. Bonn was eager for a way to align itself even more closely with America; in German minds, the MLF presented the perfect means to draw the two countries closer together, both politically and militarily. Furthermore, the growing detente between the United States and the Soviet Union alarmed the Germans. The top priority for Bonn was German reunification and the Allied retention of West Berlin. Previously, NATO, and especially the United States, had always stood up against any Soviet attempt to arrange a permanently divided Germany or to overrun Berlin. However, Bonn now feared that the gradual easing of tensions would increase the Allies' willingness to appease Russian demands in relation to Germany or Berlin. The Germans viewed the forming of a multilateral force as a warning to the Soviets that the Alliance would still forcibly oppose Russian aggression or intimidation.

Undersecretary of State George Ball outlined the Nassau Agreement to the North Atlantic Council on 11 January 1963. Excepting France, which was still considering Kennedy's offer of Polaris, and the Scandinavians, who wanted nothing to do with nuclear matters, European reaction was surprisingly favorable. The increased American commitment to a multilateral force scheme encouraged many Allies. "European reactions to the MLF were quite sharply altered as a result of the Nassau Agreement, which engaged the US much more seriously in the enterprise," reported William Tyler, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.[17] Many European statesmen anticipated that the MLF would go a long way in solving NATO's nuclear problem and increasing the

cohesion of the Alliance. Nassau provided greater assurance that the United States was sincerely interested in developing a solution and was prepared to erect the multilateral fleet. "Today a number of the European allies are looking forward to the MLF much more seriously and realistically than ever before," pronounced Tyler.[18]

Kennedy outlined his vision of the MLF in his State of the Union Address on 14 January, discussing the Nassau Agreement and how it strengthened NATO. "The Nassau Agreement recognizes that the security of the West is indivisible and so must be our defense," he contended.[19] The president argued that the new multilateral force was designed to increase the inclusion of the non-nuclear members of the Alliance so that they believed they had a meaningful part in the nuclear defense of NATO. He extolled the MLF for its ability to involve the smaller countries of NATO in the common defense without increasing nuclear dissemination. "For the first time," he summarized, "the door is open for the nuclear defense of the alliance to become a source of confidence, instead of a cause of contention."[20]

Kennedy's vision of the MLF and its role in the Atlantic alliance was dead before he presented it on the evening of 14 January. Several hours earlier, at a press conference in Paris, President de Gaulle rejected Kennedy's Nassau offer, vetoed British membership in the EEC, and announced that France would not participate in the MLF. In short order, these three decisions laid low Kennedy's "Grand Design" for an increasingly united Western Alliance led by the United States and for a highly centralized NATO nuclear strategy. The president wanted to bolster European unity and strengthen the ties between North America and Europe, and he saw the MLF as a tool that would help make this

dream a reality, but de Gaulle's position made clear a French challenge to the United States for the leadership of Europe. Instead of a more unified alliance, two leaders now emerged within NATO, each trying to draw the other NATO powers into his camp. Kennedy now fully understood the warning that Eisenhower left with him two years earlier, "de Gaulle has created a number of difficulties in the operation of NATO."[21]

De Gaulle's rejection of the Polaris offer moved Paris away from nuclear cooperation with the United States, and without French participation, the military utility of the MLF was suspect. In effect, the French president accelerated his program for a national French deterrent. The burden of recent history, some of which he had shaped, weighed heavily on the general's shoulders. In 1914-1918, France had barely survived, and in 1940 she had been abandoned by her sometime allies. In both World Wars, American military support had arrived altogether too late. He considered it utterly foolish for her to rely on the United States for nuclear delivery systems and it an insult for the French to admit that they needed American help. De Gaulle wanted his country to become a nuclear power completely on its own. A French deterrent dependent on the assistance of another country was unacceptable, as this "was her only way of ensuring that no one could attempt to destroy her without the risk of self-destruction."[22] De Gaulle's decision not to buy the Polaris missiles was also influenced by an important technical feature of Kennedy's proposal. Kennedy simply offered the missile which was nothing more than a delivery system. France was responsible for providing the nuclear warhead, and for building the submarines to carry the missiles, but the Polaris missiles could only carry a warhead of a specific size and weight. Whereas the British could produce such a

warhead, France's nuclear program was still in its infancy and incapable of manufacturing their weapons. Furthermore, the French did not deploy the submarines ready to bear these missiles. "It truly would not be useful for us to buy Polaris missiles when we have neither the submarines to launch them nor the thermonuclear warheads to arm them," the French president reasoned.[23] In addition to its effect on MLF, the rejection of the Polaris offer meant that de Gaulle wrecked the Kennedy Administration's strategy of gradual escalation inasmuch as it could not be implemented if the nuclear weapons of the West were not to be centrally targeted and controlled.

De Gaulle's veto of the British application to join the Common Market polarized the American and French camps within NATO. The French president justified the decision by citing that "the nature, structure and economic context of England differ profoundly from those of the other States of the Continent."[24] However, Washington and London believed it was due more in opposition to the "special relationship" that the Americans and British maintained over nuclear matters. It was no secret that de Gaulle believed that the United States gave Britain special treatment over France. Washington aided the development of the British nuclear program but refused any assistance to France under the pretext that the United States did not want to encourage the spread of national nuclear deterrents. The Americans argued that if they helped France, they would be obligated to aid every other ally that asked them for the same support. "What troubles us, decisively, in the case of a specifically French nuclear capability," clarified Kennedy, "is that if we should join in that effort, we would have no ground on which to resist certain and heavy pressure from the Germans for parallel treatment."[25] This policy infuriated de

Gaulle, who viewed the Nassau Agreement as merely another example of the "special relationship" and many viewed France's veto of British membership as vengeful retaliation. When reflecting on the failure of London's EEC application, Wilson judged, "Nassau was the decisive factor in destroying that initiative."[26] De Gaulle's veto erected a roadblock in the path of the growing European unity. Instead of embracing increased British association with Europe, France pushed London back into America's arms while attempting to assert her leadership of Western Europe.

De Gaulle's pronunciamentos also dashed hopes that the MLF might be a force uniting Europe and its nuclear defense. De Gaulle understood that a unanimous firing formula meant that the United States retained a veto over launching the missiles. He viewed Washington's veto and the force falling under the American led NATO as clear examples that the MLF was nothing more than a ploy by Washington to absorb the independent deterrents of Europe and give non-nuclear powers the perception of a significant role in the nuclear defense of the Alliance. Furthermore, de Gaulle complained that the American contribution of submarines to the force amounted to nothing since, "handing a few of them over to NATO would simply mean transferring them from one American command to another."[27] Kennedy vision of the MLF as a device to increase the cohesion of NATO and the unity of Europe began failing as the force was now absent one of the two NATO nuclear powers in Europe which had set itself apart to challenge the American leadership of the Alliance. The French abstention from the MLF foreshadowed the political divisiveness that the MLF would cause.

De Gaulle further challenged America's leadership of the West less than one week

later, on 20 January, by signing the Franco-German Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, an agreement calling for closer association of the two signatories in many areas, including joint efforts in defense. However, the Germans went to great lengths to make it clear that this agreement would not assist them in developing a nuclear program. Rusk admitted that there was "no evidence that the Germans have any intention with the French, openly or secretly, in any joint arrangements for development of nuclear warheads or associated weapons systems."[28] Within days of its release, many interpreted the treaty as nothing more than "an attempt by Paris to snatch Germany from American influence."[29] Kennedy negated most of the intended damage of this agreement by convincing German Chancellor Konrad Ardenauer to attach an amendment to the final version of the treaty stating that West Germany still accorded priority to Atlantic relations within NATO over bilateral relations with France. Nonetheless, the United States still worried that this might eventually lead to French nuclear assistance to Bonn and, possibly, other European countries later in exchange for closer ties with Paris. This concern accelerated the American campaign for the MLF as they hoped that the nuclear participation offered in the missile fleet would staunch any temptation by other NATO allies to reach a nuclear cooperation agreement with de Gaulle.

Kennedy immediately made the necessary arrangements for establishing the MLF. On 24 January, he commissioned an MLF Negotiating Team and charged it with conducting negotiations with Europe for the formation of the multilateral force. Diplomat Livingston Merchant was "to take the leadership of the preparation and negotiation" of the MLF proposal with the Allies, and two enthusiasts of the MLF, Gerard Smith and

Vice-Admiral John Lee, were selected for the negotiating team.[30] The team spent most of February in Washington meeting with various members of the executive branch, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE), and NATO ambassadors. The group then traveled to Paris at the end of the month and met with Finletter and other American diplomats there before beginning a series of briefings in the various capitals of Europe.

On 30 January, the White House issued National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 218 which detailed Kennedy's plans for implementing the Nassau Agreement, and negotiating the MLF. The president instructed the State Department to proceed with MLF negotiations, but contrary to previous American policy, the MLF was not to be linked with any other conditions, including meeting the conventional force goals in Europe. The possibility of an MLF agreement excited Kennedy but he warned Merchant's team that "in the course of negotiations, U.S. should not become engaged in such a way that failure to achieve agreement would seriously damage U.S. prestige."[31]

France's opinion on the MLF led Washington to fear that de Gaulle would try to thwart American diplomacy, and the State Department commissioned a study led by Roger Hilsman, Director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, to identify what steps France might take to block the MLF. Hilsman concluded that Paris could use either psychological or procedural methods or both. Psychologically, France might exert both economic and political leverage on European governments by virtue of its leadership of the EEC as well as its self-proclaimed position as the leader of continental Europe. And de Gaulle might employ procedures embodied in the NATO Charter to frustrate the establishment of the multilateral force. For instance, Hilsman's group

predicted that France could vote against measures in the North Atlantic Council that assigned the MLF to NATO, that provided for Alliance funding of the MLF headquarters, and that established MLF firing regulations for the NATO commander. "If the MLF is to be a NATO force, be in the NATO command structure, and receive from the Council guidelines for use and funding for the headquarters," concluded Hilsman, then "France could frustrate its establishment if it chose to do so." In light of the French opposition, Hilsman recommended removing the force from NATO and, instead, establishing it under a separate authority. "French vetoes could be evaded if the forces were to be organized largely outside the NATO structure."[32] The United States thus departed from the initial concept of a purely NATO force for the MLF and towards assigning the force to NATO while having it governed by a different organization.

The possibility of a multilateral force free from NATO control increased the Soviet Union's strenuous opposition to the MLF plan. Moscow's opposition was at first dismissed as typical Cold War foreign policy, but Foy Kohler, the American ambassador to the Soviet Union, perceived the deeper issue. "The Soviets are in deadly earnest in their concern over the possibility of eventual German control over nuclear delivery systems (MRBMs) capable of effectively penetrating the USSR," he explained.[33] The USSR feared German access to nuclear weapons even more than most Europeans. Anatoly Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to the United States, declared that the Kremlin "would not accept Germany with nuclear weapons," a blunt statement of policy clearly informed by the recent, tragic past.[34] Washington explained to Moscow that the American veto would always prevent the Germans from firing the weapons by themselves, but the

Soviets were not convinced. "If the Germans were ever able to have access to nuclear weapons even for a short time," warned Dobrynin, "they might do something foolish which would be very bad for both of us."[35]

Numerous other criticisms besides German association with nuclear weapons emerged concerning the Nassau Agreement and the multilateral force, but little opposition was voiced about Macmillan's paragraph 6 multinational force. Informed opinion in Britain welcomed assigning some RAF bombers to NATO under the multinational force so long as they were manned by British crews. As the Ambassador to France, Pierson Dixon, explained, "The concept of working for a multilateral force in the long-term and assigning some of our existing forces to NATO in the short-term was in our view excellent."[36]

In short order, however, the eagerness with which the Americans pressed the multilateral nuclear force plan angered London. Whereas the Pentagon acknowledged that a multilateral force, "cannot come into being for some years," President Kennedy spoke excitedly of how the arrangements of the Nassau Agreement would "satisfy the desires of other Europeans to have a greater control over the use of nuclear weapons."[37] Within a week of the 20 December meetings in Nassau, the president organized the Steering Group for Implementing the Nassau Decisions. This group concerned itself with devising recommended actions for the president to take in initiating the programs agreed upon at Nassau, which varied from the Merchant group mission of international negotiations within the Alliance. This Steering Group gave close attention to the MLF scheme and the best ways to move it forward. The British Government overlooked its

concern about the building momentum behind the multilateral force while working with the United States to make the paragraph 6 force become a reality as soon as possible.

The paragraph 6 negotiations began in Washington on 16 February as part of a larger bilateral discussion on implementing the Nassau Agreement. Problems emerged almost immediately once it became clear that the two countries had different purposes for the force. The British viewed paragraph 6, Macmillan's nationally manned and NATO controlled nuclear fleet, as the long term nuclear solution for NATO while the Americans viewed it only as a temporary measure until the establishment of the MLF. Paragraph 6 amounted to the consolidation of all nuclear weapons assigned to NATO into one force for improved command and control of the allied deterrent. State Department official Leonard Weiss surmised, "paragraph 6 is not terribly earth-shaking."[38] The prospects of the MLF concerned the United States much more and Washington felt that focused American attention on paragraph 6 rather than paragraph 8 detracted in several ways from the MLF campaign. First, it would anger the Germans who had already committed themselves to the MLF which they viewed as their best opportunity to achieve a nuclear role. Second, Secretary-General of NATO Dirk Stikker would feel betrayed because he "would see this as still another switch in US policy toward NATO immediately after he was 'taken on board'," by the MLF proposal.[39] Finally, shifting focus would "generally confuse the entire Alliance as to how long the US is prepared to stick to a given policy."[40] The Americans worried that a strong advocacy for paragraph 6 within NATO would cause the MLF proposal to collapse. Jeffrey Kitchen, the Assistant Secretary for Politico-Military Affairs in the State Department, remarked, "if the MLF fails, then the whole

Nassau episode boils down to a US sale of Polaris submarines to the British."[41] The United States quietly went along with the British force, owing to its obligation from the Nassau Agreement, despite Kitchen's recommendation that "unless we believe the MLF is a non-starter ... we should not now push Paragraph 6."[42]

The British continued working with the Americans to form the paragraph 6 force; at the same time, they sent two delegations to the United States at the end of February 1963 to negotiate the final, precise terms of the agreement. The Admiralty led the first group, which dealt with the technical and financial details of transferring the missiles. The second team, composed of Foreign Office and Ministry of Defense officials, was in charge of drafting a formal agreement with the State Department and Department of Defense to replace the joint statement issued at Nassau. Both Britain and America agreed on the importance of presenting a unified front to the North Atlantic Council when it examined the Nassau Agreement, and therefore the second group also worked with the Americans to align their approach with the Nassau decisions. Whitehall instructed both delegations that securing the Polaris sale was their "primary objective" and that they were to be flexible with Washington's insistence on preserving the multilateral force component of the Agreement.[43]

Both powers wanted to establish a NATO nuclear force, but for different reasons. The American aim "was primarily to control and restrain the supposed aspirations of the Federal Republic of Germany," explained Minister of Defense Peter Thorneycroft, whereas "the British aim rather to make the earliest possible start in realising the ideal of NATO co-operation in the application of nuclear power to the problem of defense of the

West."[44] London offered strong public support for the multinational NATO nuclear force while viewing the American mixed-manned nuclear force with skepticism owing to doubts about the its necessity and effectiveness. The British did not object to it entirely, but instead wanted more time to explore the concept and its feasibility. To London's dismay, soon after Nassau, the Kennedy regime urged the immediate establishment of a multilateral force; this caught the British off guard and unprepared to qualify and defend their complex position.

The Kennedy Administration created a stir in Europe in February 1963 when they transformed the MLF from a submarine force to a surface ship force. Although not specified at Nassau, the Europeans assumed that this force would be a submarine force because of the Polaris deal in the Nassau Agreement and in light of the multilateral submarine force previously proposed by the United States. The Europeans liked the idea of submarines because they were technologically advanced ships, owned by only the most powerful navies, and supposed to be virtually invulnerable to the enemy. However instead of submarines, the United States outlined a surface ship fleet with each vessel resembling a merchant ship and fitted with eight Polaris missiles. Washington preferred the surface ship option for a variety of reasons. Surface diesel ships were cheaper and faster to produce which meant that the force would cost less and could be put to sea much sooner. Surface ships were also simpler to build which meant that much of the shipyard construction could take place in Europe, giving them a greater feel of ownership. Furthermore, the submarine MLF evoked fierce opposition from some members of Congress and Vice-Admiral Hyman Rickover, head of the U.S. Navy's nuclear propulsion program. Both the

Congressmen and Rickover feared that top secret nuclear propulsion technology would be compromised if foreign crews were allowed onto American submarines. The Kennedy Administration shied away from the submarine idea both for the surface ship's advantages and in light of the staunch resistance from some in Washington. Most importantly though, surface ships were easier to operate than submarines and when implementing the complex program of mixed manning, it seemed logical to chose the least complicated configuration. The president explained that "the principle of the Nassau accord would carry whether it was a submarine or a surface ship."[45]

The Merchant negotiating team, armed with a surface ship MLF plan, scheduled the first round of MLF negotiations in the various NATO capitals for late February. The arranging of these talks highlighted the need for a clear strategy within the State Department for MLF negotiations. Rusk requested a report from Walt Rostow, Chairman of the Policy Planning Council in the State Department, on the most effective way to achieve an agreement on the MLF. Rostow returned warning that the negotiations could drag out for a long period of time, but encouraged the United States to press on "recognizing that we are dealing with a complicated problem which will probably take a long time to resolve."[46] He argued that the MLF would not become less practical or beneficial if the discussions stretched out over a longer time than was hoped. He urged the State Department to continue suggesting nuclear plans for NATO, but to avoid advocating them in such a way that would make them appear as acceptable alternatives to the multilateral force. "It may be useful to stress the need for taking the long view in our MLF approach," advised Rostow, "and not to panic if we cannot get a detailed MLF

agreement this month."[47]

The MLF Negotiating Team began its trip through Europe by briefing the North Atlantic Council in Paris on 28 February. Thomas Finletter, Washington's Ambassador to NATO, detailed five essential components of the MLF in the American view: mixed manned crews, a fleet composed of surface ships, a unanimous firing formula, a fleet formed concurrent with a conventional build-up, and a continually modernizing premier military force. The purpose of his trip was to conduct bilateral talks with the NATO allies to explain the complex issues involved in the MLF. The Council supported the MLF concept but questioned some of the specifics, including the cost of the force and the employment of surface ships rather than submarines. Most of the detailed discussion was deferred to the bilateral negotiations. The American procedure for these discussions called for meetings first with the foreign and defense ministers followed by meetings with other important officials to discuss the legal, organizational, command and control, missile, ship, and nuclear aspects of the proposed fleet. The team also tried to meet with each head of state if he was interested in hearing a detailed presentation of the MLF scheme.

Merchant's team stopped in Rome on 4 March to meet with Italian Prime Minister Amintore Fanfani and other officials. Overall, the Italians favored the idea of a multilateral force. They were anxious for a greater role in nuclear policy and viewed MLF as the most promising means to satisfy this aspiration. Fanfani supported the principle and predicted that Italy would participate in the fleet, but cautioned that he could make no final decisions until after the Italian general elections scheduled for 28 April. Merchant was surprised

that the most significant issue raised by Rome concerned the employment of surface ships rather than submarines. Fanfani complained that he had briefed his cabinet on the assumption that the fleet would be composed of submarines. The prime minister eventually resolved himself to a neutral position on the issue once Merchant explained the American rationale for surface ships. "Compared to this issue," remarked Merchant, "the other elements of our concept as presented did not seem to give great difficulty to the Italians who appear to be prepared to support the MLF with substantial resources."[48]

NATO Secretary- General Paul Henri Spaak, along with the king and prime minister of Belgium, listened to the MLF presentation given by Merchant's team in Brussels on 5 March. They supported the plan, but Spaak had reservations. He informed the Americans of staunch opposition within the Belgian Ministry of Defense which threatened to impede Belgian participation. He also questioned how Belgium could financially reconcile the need to support their conventional forces and the large cost of the MLF. "Something had to be done to make their conventional forces combat worthy and that it was hard to see how funds could be found for an MLF over and beyond those needed for improving their conventional forces," he said.[49] Spaak also explained that the British and German positions would influence Brussels' stance, leading Merchant to predict that Belgium would participate should both London and Bonn join the MLF.

The MLF Negotiating Team appeared the following day in Bonn, where support for the MLF was known to be robust. Ardenauer proclaimed, "the multilateral force is a magnificent political concept."[50] Agreement was quickly reached on a seaborne force, mixed manning, and joint ownership and control, but the Germans disagreed with the

firing formula and the substitution of surface ships for submarines. The Germans, ever conscious of their vulnerable position on the frontier between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, feared that a single MLF member might neutralize the force with a veto under a voting formula based on unanimity. Instead, the Germans wanted a majority voting formula, but the Americans delegation flatly refused to give up Washington's veto. The abandonment of a submarine force also caused concern. Just as in Rome, the Americans offered the reasons in favor of surface ships and allowed the issue to pass with the German observation that the question was "still up for push and pull."[51] Howard Furnas, head of Merchant's MLF staff, paid scant attention to this inasmuch as "the German preference for submarines over surface ships seems less related to the merits of the issue than to desires for prestige."[52] Overall, the Germans were enthusiastic about the plan and prepared to move ahead towards an MLF agreement.

Merchant's European tour ended on the 12th in London where the team spent two days with Prime Minister Macmillan and key members of the cabinet. Merchant recited the same force characteristics that he had briefed to the other nations throughout his trip. He also touched on some different areas with the British. He first discussed the usefulness of the MLF in preventing Germany's "almost inescapable temptation to build nuclear weapons of their own," and explained why British participation in the MLF was vital to NATO's acceptance.[53] "It would be difficult," explained Merchant, "for the scheme to be a real success if Great Britain were not a founder member."[54] Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the Foreign Secretary, dismissed Merchant's first point because he felt as if the German nuclear desire, if present at all, was the result of Americans insinuating its existence. "We

do not consider that there was any real danger of the Germans seeking to acquire weapons of their own in the immediately foreseeable future," he argued.[55] Furthermore, Macmillan informed Merchant that establishing the paragraph 6 force was a higher priority to his government than the MLF at the present time. However, the prime minister added that he hoped progress could be made on the MLF concurrently.

Britain's lackluster position about the MLF alarmed many in Washington who saw London as having a pivotal position in the multilateral force negotiations. The Kennedy Administration perceived the wavering British position and sought out arguments for their participation. Washington argued that the MLF presented an excellent chance for Whitehall to avenge de Gaulle's attempt to separate Great Britain from the rest of Europe by his rejection of London's application to the Common Market. If countries such as Germany and Italy participated in the joint force, London could join as a way of increasing it ties with continental Europe. "The UK can best give the lie to DeGaulle's argument that it is insufficiently European minded to qualify for admission to the European community by exploiting any remaining opportunities for closer association with the Continent," explained Rusk, and he added, "the most significant opportunity to this end is probably the MLF."[56] The United States also placed extensive pressure on London to participate in MLF simply because they agreed to it as part of the deal for Polaris at Nassau. The British Government had many significant criticisms of the MLF, but continued its consideration of the MLF owing to its pledge at Nassau and the fear that Polaris would be revoked if it did not adhere to its obligations in the Agreement.

Merchant compiled a detailed report describing his MLF presentations in Europe

following their conclusion in mid-March 1963. He was encouraged by the reception that his talks received from foreign governments. Overall, the Europeans expressed significant interest in learning the details of the MLF proposal and the presentations made by the negotiating team increased the discussion of the scheme among the Allies. Merchant asserted, "A substantial element of the leadership of important members of the alliance wants an MLF -- and any doubts on this score in the US should be sat at rest."[57] He related to Rusk that the interested countries agreed with most of the proposal, but two difficult issues continued to be the substitution of surface ships for submarines and the unanimous firing formula with a permanent American veto. On the first issue, Merchant remained firm: "The force should be a surface force," he told Rusk.[58] Second, the American veto seemed sensible in as much as "it is almost inconceivable to me that under the circumstances when all the other partners knew that we were not prepared to loose our own retaliatory forces there would not be at least one partner who should see the lunacy of acting under those circumstances without us."[59]

His Europe trip reinforced Livingston Merchant's enthusiasm for the MLF plan; he supposed that an MLF agreement would have both prompt benefits for American foreign policy and long range advantages for the Atlantic alliance. "The immediate effect," he predicted, "will be to register a signal success in the prosecution of our broader Atlantic and European policy."[60] Merchant believed that Germany, in particular, needed a measure of nuclear participation, and that without MLF, Bonn might begin their own nuclear program. Furthermore, he foresaw the Germans turning to the French if the United States refused to aid them in their nuclear aspirations. Merchant theorized that the MLF would

quell the nuclear aspirations of their NATO allies and teach them about the grim complexities of nuclear policy. "Increasing exposure to nuclear responsibility, as they plan the use of warheads in which they share ownership, may sober them, as it has sobered the United Kingdom," contended Merchant.[61]

Merchant downplayed significant opposition to the MLF that existed inside some European cabinets in his report back to Washington. The ministries of defense, in particular, viewed the concept of an MLF as ridiculous and the nuclear participation given to Germany as careless. Field-Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery, former Deputy-Supreme Allied Commander Europe, termed it "absolute and complete poppycock," and Lord Mountbatten, Chief of the British Defence Staff, recalled it as "the greatest piece of military nonsense" he had come across in fifty years.[62] Many European defense professionals saw no need for MLF, but rather viewed it as an unnecessary and foolish expenditure. Mountbatten, for instance, challenged MLF's practicality, reasoning that "almost everyone seems to agree [MLF] will only be useable in conditions of General War, which, we all accept, would result in mutual suicide."[63] It was difficult for countries like Norway to rationalize participation when their Defense Minister publicly stated, "Indeed, we do not see any sense in this proposal either from the point of view of NATO or from a wider point of view."[64] The internal opposition that most of the European NATO powers faced created a substantial hurdle for MLF's establishment.

Britain's views on the multilateral force shifted from skepticism to grave concern in the early months of 1963. London had always viewed the multilateral arm as a force to be formed in the distant future but it now appeared much closer to a reality than

previously anticipated. Furthermore, the recent revisions in the American scheme that transformed the submarine-based force into a surface ship force raised new concerns, including the force's increased vulnerability and the cost of a new class of ships. Whitehall, in a state of trepidation, made an earnest attempt to develop the government's firm opinions on the force and the many issues it embodied. Critics of the proposed mixed-manned force emerged within Whitehall almost immediately. Minister of Defense Peter Thorneycroft blasted the plan as "not only militarily quite unnecessary but financially unsupportable." He complained that "we are trying to extract from a military nonsense something that can be dressed up as a panacea to overcome our political dilemmas." This outpouring caught Macmillan by surprise and placed him in the difficult position of having committed his cabinet to a plan that some of his key officials outspokenly opposed. Tory leader Edward Heath saw the hazard of the current British position and warned that "we are in danger of a head-on collision with the Americans on this issue."[65]

German involvement with nuclear weapons proved as substantial of a stumbling block in the minds of the British as the force's military practicality. The British were extremely hesitant to allow a German finger close to the nuclear trigger. Some of this reflected longstanding prejudice. Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd confessed in 1960 that "we share with the Norwegians and the Dutch the distinction of being the most anti-German of Hitler's former opponents."[66] This was the same distrust that the international community held for Germany following two world wars. By contrast, President Eisenhower opposed this discrimination feverishly. "Allies should be treated as allies," he said, "not as junior members of a firm who are to be seen and not heard."[67] Kennedy was

more concerned with keeping Germany content so as to maintain his plan for a more closely joined Europe under American hegemony, and thus supported MLF as a way of preserving the tranquility in the Alliance. Nonetheless, the apparent "incipient nuclear appetite" on the part of the Germans frightened many Europeans.[68] German policy enhanced these sentiments. Chancellor Ardenauer announced on 6 February 1963 that Germans "want to bear full responsibility together with others for effective NATO deterrent forces."[69] The whole concept of Bonn's participation in nuclear matters was difficult for many in London, and elsewhere, to accept.

The conflict between its commitments and the public and internal opposition forced the British cabinet to reexamine its whole approach to the idea of a multilateral force following Merchant's visit.. The Foreign Office, undecided on its stance, recommended that London not reveal any misgivings about participating in the force to the Americans for the moment so as "to make sure that no difficulties arise over the supply of Polaris."[70] Whitehall was fearful that any signs of British deviance from paragraph 8 of the Nassau Agreement would jeopardize the entire deal, including the provision to purchase Polaris. Every British official realized that they could not afford to forfeit this opportunity. The Macmillan cabinet, therefore, chose to take a path of silent non-commitment, while attempting to reach an acceptable decision within its own ranks.

Thus, on the surface the MLF appeared to have four potential major members by the end of March 1963. The United States, Great Britain, Italy, and Germany all possessed the interest, financial capability, and military strength to provide the bulk of the resources necessary to establish the MLF. These four countries had reached consensus,

by the end of March, on the major points of the multilateral force proposal, with the exclusion of the firing formula and the surface versus submarine question. The outlined a force that would be jointly manned and controlled, seaborne, and open to all willing participants. They four countries agreed to leave the two sticking points unresolved until a later date and to set up a Preparatory Commission to draft an MLF Treaty once a preliminary agreement has been signed.

On 24 April, Merchant and Gerard Smith proposed that Secretary Rusk select one of two different approaches towards an MLF agreement. Either a treaty might be negotiated by the North Atlantic Council or the interested countries might sign a preliminary agreement to be followed by a treaty drafted by a working group. Both Smith and Merchant endorsed the second path, they feared that negotiations in Paris would get bogged down in some of the complicated issues of the proposal and reduce the chances of an MLF agreement. To the contrary, signing a preliminary agreement and establishing a working group might be completed quickly and bring added credibility to the MLF effort. Furthermore, signing the preliminary agreement could be a feature of Kennedy's forthcoming trip to Europe that June which would give the visit added purpose and publicly display the president's support for the scheme.

The State Department quickly began working on a draft for the preliminary agreement. Five major points had to be clearly stated: the multilateral and seaborne character of the force, the force not being in place of the continued conventional build-up, the organization of the Preparatory Commission, the sharing of costs, and that force being established as soon as possible. The push for a preliminary agreement temporarily stalled

several weeks into May, however, when Fanfani informed Merchant that "the Italian electorial campaign has led to the question being shelved here."[71] The domestic divisiveness that the MLF created throughout much of Western Europe meant that no head of state wanted to discuss the issue around the time of national elections for fear that supporting the MLF might hurt his showing at the ballot box. Smith and Merchant understood that the controversy and strong feelings surrounding the MLF concept made it an unpopular topic during election seasons. Throughout the proposal's consideration, they allowed the issue to fade out of discussion during national elections, not only in Italy, but in Germany and Britain as well.

Kennedy met with Merchant and other State Department officials in the end of April for an update on the MLF progress. After hearing their reports, Kennedy instructed that studies be done on the vulnerability of a surface ship force and on the security of American nuclear information on board these ships. The vulnerability study was in response to the European argument that a surface ship fleet was too susceptible to a Russian first strike to be worthwhile. The second study was aimed at quelling the predictable fears in Congress that the MLF would compromise American nuclear secrets. Both studies returned with salutary answers a week later. The US Navy study headed up by Admiral George Anderson predicted that, even with a Russian first strike, and depending on deployments, the Soviet Navy might sink at most seven MLF ships out of the envisioned twenty-five ship fleet, leaving eighteen vessels free to retaliate. The security study concluded that through strictly enforced regulations and coded firing systems, the nuclear information could be protected from unauthorized personnel.

Kennedy met with State, Defense, and Atomic Energy Commission officials on 3 May. He laid out the next steps in continuing negotiations towards an MLF agreement. The uncertain position of the British Government worried Kennedy because he anticipated Britain playing an important role in the new allied force. He therefore instructed the State Department to get discussions underway immediately with Her Majesty's Government. He also ordered a delay in Congressional consultations on MLF until after discussions resumed with London. Finally, he asked the State Department to prepare a paper on the political case for the MLF. Presumably, Kennedy wanted the paper for his own consumption and for use in negotiations with Congress.

The indecisive British position concerned the Kennedy Administration and led to questions about the necessity of London's participation. Washington believed that Her Majesty's Government's participation was advantageous since Germany strongly hoped for British participation and expected the United States to demand London's contribution owing to the special relationship shared between America and Britain. "UK abstention would make MLF a venture between the US and 'little Europe'," warned Undersecretary Ball.[72] It would be difficult to obtain Congressional approval for a treaty if Britain and France abandoned the MLF, leaving the United States the only nuclear power involved. Such a force would not promote the increased cohesion envisioned as a major purpose for the force. In light of the importance of British participation, Ball recommended in a 6 May letter to Kennedy, "We should try to define the commitment we now seek from the UK in terms which the present British government might be able to accept."[73] Ball urged Kennedy to insist on British participation in the treaty drafting, British support of an

agreement based on unanimity and surface ships, and continued public support of the MLF proposal by Macmillan. Ball believed, however, that Britain's resistance might be overcome should the United States make concessions on a couple of issues. A ten percent contribution of the total force cost had been requested of Great Britain, which would amount to an annual sum of approximately 5.2 million dollars, but Whitehall still had trouble justifying the financial commitment. Ball suggested that if Washington allowed London's ten percent contribution to be made in the form of bases and materials rather than funds, the British financial hold-up could be overcome. Ball understood that much of Macmillan's fear of fighting for the MLF resulted from his apprehension about its effect on election issues. Ball theorized that if Washington could get the German Social Democrats to convince Harold Wilson, head of Macmillan's opposition, to not oppose the MLF, than Macmillan could act free of his previous fears. Finally, Ball recommended that the British be allowed to participate in the treaty drafting without commitment as this would permit them to take part while they decided the extent of their participation.

The State Department initiated talks once again with the British in hopes of bringing them closer to the American position on the MLF. Macmillan perceived the American objective behind the renewed discussions and reasoned with Thorneycroft to take a more appeasing position with the delegation from Washington. "A good deal of harm has been done in American minds by the way the British staffs have given the impression that they have closed their minds in advance."[74] Macmillan did not necessarily want the British to pledge support of the MLF, he was more concerned in pacifying Washington. On 29 May, Patrick Gordon-Walker warned Merchant that "Macmillan will

'lead [the US] up the garden path' on the MLF until after the election," which was not scheduled until May or October 1964.[75] Gordon-Walker reasoned that "participation in or commitment of UK membership to the MLF would dilute to the point of destruction what Macmillan considers to be his trump election argument against Labor. This is independence, influence and greatness."[76] Despite Macmillan's suggestion to Thorneycroft, the American delegation found the British position entirely indecisive. Merchant characterized it as "waffling and likely to continue thus until election is over."[77]

British indecision became more awkward when the United States stepped up its efforts to promote the multilateral force throughout Western Europe. Kennedy visited several of the interested countries in June 1963, and he sent Vice Admiral Claude V. Ricketts, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, ahead on a tour of European capitals to discuss the specific details of such a force. Ricketts obtained agreements, in principle, from two key participants, Italy and Germany. Captain C.C. Anderson, the naval attaché in Bonn, complained to the Admiralty about American arm twisting. The German "Naval Staff...have now had their minds made up for them by Admiral Ricketts."[78] Rome and Bonn considered British participation almost a prerequisite. London, already committed to such a force in principle, found this pivotal position uncomfortable.

Ricketts faced his most difficult interlocateurs in the British Admiralty during meetings in London on 4 and 5 June. There the discussions revisited the platform question and the military necessity of a nuclear missile-bearing fleet. He argued that mixed manning would create more problems on a submarine because it was more complex to operate than a ship. He also contended that the ships might hide in the shallow waters

around the European continent where submarines could not operate. Furthermore, because the ships would resemble merchant ships, they would be difficult for the Soviets to detect and could also operate freely in shipping lanes which they could use for concealment. "The United States Navy had concluded," declared Ricketts, "that if an enemy wished to eliminate the multilateral force by a surprise attack, the task would be so vast and the time-table so tight that it would be quite impossible to knock out the whole force."[79] Thorneycroft believed that the fleet would be somewhat more vulnerable than the Americans supposed, but he agreed that it would be a dependable deterrent. Although satisfied on the first issue, Thorneycroft reminded Ricketts that "the main question in the minds of British Ministers was whether there was a military requirement for the force."[80] Ricketts was unconvincing on this second issue. "The greater certainty of delivering a really decisive retaliatory blow upon Russia in future years," was a true advantage, he asserted.[81] But the Admiralty destroyed this argument when Ricketts conceded that "there probably was a critical threshold beyond which nuclear capacity was superfluous as a deterrent, and also that at present that threshold had been passed."[82] Mountbatten asked why London should support such an expensive force if the weapons were not needed, especially when "the money had to be found from a Defence Budget that was already overtrained."[83] Thorneycroft left these meetings convinced that "in light of these discussions it does not seem possible to support the case for these proposals on military grounds, and it is certainly difficult in such circumstances to say what political value attaches to them."[84]

Kennedy took off on 23 June 1963 for a quick European tour that proved pivotal

to the ongoing MLF debate. In Europe, the president spoke of his vision of a unified Europe equal to the United States and an Atlantic partnership growing in interdependence. "The United States will risk its cities to defend yours because we need your freedom to protect ours," he proclaimed in West Berlin.[85] His vision excited many Europeans, especially the West Germans, who were quick to embrace the MLF as bringing added cohesion to the Atlantic partnership and as a preliminary step towards an eventually independent European force. The trip concluded with a meeting with Macmillan at Birch Grove, England, on 29 June. The president had expected to find the European governments excited about the prospects of a joint missile fleet and entered the talks at Birch Grove depressed at the what he perceived to be lackluster enthusiasm towards the MLF. Kennedy's disappointment showed itself at Birch Grove in his concession to Macmillan. The two heads of state emerged from their meeting with the agreement to proceed slowly on MLF.[86] Macmillan bragged, "Altogether, it was a great success for our point of view."[87] Kennedy thought it a sharp blow to the MLF plan.

Kennedy's European progression had the paradoxical effect of stimulating European eagerness for the MLF while leaving the president convinced that the Allied governments were not significantly interested in a multilateral force. Upon returning, Kennedy initiated a new MLF policy that National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy summarized on 11 July. Kennedy was discouraged about the lack of MLF enthusiasm he perceived in Europe, but agreed with the State Department that bilateral and multilateral discussions would increase European support. However, Kennedy insisted that the United States not push the MLF on Europe. Bundy affirmed, "he does not wish the negotiations

to go forward in a way which would recreate any impression that the United States is trying to 'sell' the MLF to reluctant European purchasers," rather, "the decision on participation will have to be made by each nation for itself."[88] Kennedy approved State Department plans for beginning informal multilateral discussions on MLF in Washington during the summer in the hope that the increased dialogue would engender European enthusiasm for the missile fleet. By summer 1963 the president had reached the conclusion that, "developing a more closely unified Atlantic deterrent, with genuine European participation ... is not easy - in some ways more difficult to split the atom politically than it was physically."[89] However, there were a dedicated few in the State Department who still believed in the practicality of the MLF and intended to pursue it, vigorously.

Chapter Four

Livingston Merchant and Gerard Smith hosted the first in a series of informal MLF discussions on 18 July in Washington. The German and Italian ambassadors joined them at this opening meeting, and the Greek and Turkish representatives appeared shortly thereafter. The group met weekly and discussed issues involving the MLF and the best ways to move forward. The first sessions were spent reviewing a paper composed by the State Department, and approved by the president, entitled "Basic Elements of an MLF Charter." Merchant explained that it outlined "most if not all of the concepts we think essential to the MLF."[1] After several weeks of discussion, Germany and Italy reported that they agreed in principle with the paper, but wanted to begin more substantive discussions in a formal Multilateral Force Working Group. They hoped that formal discussions could move the MLF project along faster, and proposed Paris as the negotiating site. "The political group should meet in Paris because the MLF would operate mainly from Europe and is designed largely to meet European desires in the nuclear question," contended Milesi Ferretti, Minister at the Italian Embassy in Washington.[2] The other governments, including the United States, agreed with the reasoning and approved the proposal for the Working Group in September.

Britain's abstention from these early meetings demonstrated the disparate positions of the interested countries regarding the MLF. Those participating in the informal discussions felt that British participation was especially important owing to the additional prominence and legitimacy that London would bring to the force. Many of the smaller NATO countries balked at participating without the British. The Americans grew

indignant at London's indecision which threatened to unravel the entire MLF endeavor, viewing British participation in both the talks and the force as a settled matter in light of the Nassau Agreement. They were naturally irritated at Whitehall's apparent hesitation about joining in MLF negotiations. "We are tied by our 'special relationship' and the Polaris deal," admitted Claud Wright, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Ministry of Defence.[3] Washington made it clear, in the terms of reference for the Working Group, that "the time for observing is over."[4] This American stance sent the unwelcome message to London that participation or non-participation in the Working Group went hand-in-hand with having a role in the force itself.

Intense discussion within Whitehall attended the question of British participation in the Working Group. The general consensus was that Britain had little choice but to join the talks. London had two options, either not participate and accept the ramifications or participate and seek the most favorable arrangement of the force. "The scheme...will almost certainly go forward with us or without us," pointed out Oliver Wright, Private Secretary for the Prime Minister.[5] Defense Minister Thorneycroft predicted this result as well and warned, "If we do not go into the talks at all, we must face the prospect of the implementation of the proposals without us and of a diminution of our standing with the United States, Germany and NATO at large."[6] And a decision not to participate meant that Macmillan would have to reneg on the Nassau Agreement, risk the purchase of Polaris, and, most importantly, jeopardize the "special relationship" on nuclear matters with America. There was one advantage in joining the Working Group, Shuckburgh explained. "At the very least it might be a way of buying time."[7] In response to these

arguments, the government agreed to "take part in the discussions on the clear understanding that it does not commit them to participate in a mixed-manned NATO multilateral nuclear force."[8]

The decision over Working Group participation highlighted the differences within Whitehall on the multilateral force. The Foreign Secretary wanted Britain to join both the Working Group and the force owing to his concern that refusing would harm relations with Washington and Bonn. An additional reason was that "unless we take part from the start we may be unable to influence the shape which it assumes."[9] He was certain the cabinet did "not want to repeat the history of our relations with the Common Market."[10] The Minister of Defense was staunchly opposed to the multilateral force on the grounds that it would come at the expense of an increase in conventional arms, that it was militarily unsound, and that adding new nuclear weapons and delivery platforms to the Western arsenal was superfluous and an unnecessary cost. "My own view has always been that we could meet a substantial part of the political requirement by using existing and planned weapons rather than by building new ones especially for the purpose," proclaimed Thorneycroft.[11] Macmillan, forced to choose between his two key "power ministers," supported participation in the Working Group but withheld his verdict on Britain's commitment to the force.[12]

The Multilateral Force Working Group held their initial meeting on 11 October in Paris. Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Greece, and Turkey joined the United States with the aim "to reach inter-governmental agreement covering such things as ownership of the new nuclear weapons and the political arrangements of their use."[13] The

members entered the negotiations with the understanding that participation in the Working Group did not commit any country to participate in the eventual force. The Working Group examined the many issues involved in establishing a multilateral force; ideal size and manning, military discipline, pay, legality, financing, security of the nuclear weapons, firing process, and the procedure for dissolving the force if necessary. The Paris group rotated chairman at each meeting, but the United States provided silent leadership for the Working Group throughout its duration. Washington expected the group to move quickly in resolving the important issues necessary for a draft charter. The representatives established a Military Sub-Group in Washington under American Admiral Alfred Ward as their first order of business. The sub-group met simultaneously to "look at the questions pertinent to the organization and operation of the Multilateral Force as a military force."[14] The United States anticipated the Working Group finishing its work by late December 1963. "We hope the Paris Working Group can roll up its sleeves, meet daily, and otherwise comport itself so as to get the job done at a brisk pace," announced Howard Furnas, head of Merchant's MLF staff.[15]

The Working Group first resolved the characteristics of the force. The members decided on a fleet of twenty-five surface missile warships each armed with eight Polaris ballistic missiles. The ships would resemble merchant ships with a merchant-type hull and radar system. The Allies hoped that the merchant-like appearance would allow the ships to camouflage themselves within the commercial trade routes. Each ship would have a crew of two hundred men with various nationalities equally distributed throughout the rank structure. The Working Group decided on establishing two bases for the force, one

in the Mediterranean and one in the Atlantic. The group also included provisions for modernizing the force with new platforms, even leaving the possibility of submarines open.

The Paris group voiced the need for highly trained personnel for service on board the MLF ships. The complex missile systems demanded intelligent and capable sailors. The group members devised a manning program so that all those assigned to the MLF would retain their national citizenship but wear an MLF uniform and be subject to the MLF command structure. They also outlined a disciplinary plan in which the force's commanders would handle minor infractions while major offenses would be referred back to the accused sailor's country. The disparate military pay of the various member countries confronted the Working Group as well. They felt that it was important for morale and unity that all members of the same rank receive the same pay regardless of their nationality. Furthermore, they understood that reducing the pay of some during their duty with the MLF would not be sensible. Instead, they devised a scheme to provide bonuses in the pay system so that every sailor serving with the MLF would make as much as the highest paid sailor of the same rank.

Many in the Working Group questioned how a multilateral force would fit under international law. They intended the fleet to be its own separate entity with its own uniforms and flag. The Working Group set up a Legal Sub-Group in Paris tasked with determining the legality of a multilateral force. The sub-group decided that only the flag and the force's relationship with the Geneva Convention raised significant issues that required examination. The question of whether the Geneva Convention applied to the MLF generated considerable concern within the Paris Working Group. They wanted

assurance that captured MLF sailors would be protected by the rules governing the treatment of prisoners of war, and not considered pirates, as the Soviet Union had threatened. The Legal Sub-Group concluded that the MLF flag was permissible and that MLF personnel would fall under the protection of the rules of war.

The Working Group concentrated on the financing plan of the force as well. The group members divided the costs for the force among the member nations with each country covering a specified percentage of the total expenditure. The influence each country had on the force was directly proportional to the extent of their support. On all decisions other than firing, each member had a percentage of the vote equivalent to their percentage of contribution. In order to assure that no nation exerted disproportionate influence on the force, no country could take on more than forty percent of the total expense. The original plan called for thirty-five percent contributions from the United States and Germany, fifteen percent from Italy, ten percent from Great Britain, and five percent from the Netherlands. Greece and Turkey both planned to contribute with manpower but not financially. The force would have a chief executive officer who bore the responsibility of preparing and submitting the annual budgets to the MLF's Board of Governors. The board would be composed of a representative from each member nation and would be responsible for overseeing the operation of the force. The Working Group estimated that a ten percent contribution would be 5.2 million dollars per year for the first five years of the force, due to ship construction, and then 1.6 million dollars per year afterwards.

Many in Paris viewed the security of the nuclear weapons entrusted to the force as

one of the paramount issues requiring the Working Group's attention. The group delegated the investigation to a Sub-Group on Security and Safety. The sub-group designed a plan that would ensure protection of the warheads. They arranged for the installation of Permissive Action Links (PALs) on each missile which prevented the missiles from being armed or fired without a predetermined code. Although foreign sailors could help work on the weapons, there would be an American safety officer aboard each ship who would oversee the security and maintenance of each missile. The missiles would be protected by the same standards that the United States used on its other ships to prevent espionage or sabotage. The sub-group concluded, "It would be feasible to organize and operate the MLF under strict security procedures ... which would ensure that nuclear weapons of the Force could not be fired without proper authorization ... and would be protected against sabotage, espionage and unauthorized disclosure of design data."[16]

The most formidable obstacle facing the Working Group attended the firing formula for the missiles, which continued to be the most divisive issue throughout the MLF discussions. Although a unanimous voting decision was originally envisioned, the question was fiercely debated in the Working Group. Germany and Italy acknowledged the necessity of a unanimous voting formula for the MLF's first years, but they wanted it replaced with a majority voting formula several years later. Von Hassel argued that if the majority decision were put into place, "the danger of one of the partners making these effective weapons useless by a veto is eliminated."[17] The United States publicly agreed to the reexamination several years later and the possibility of a majority voting formula, but

privately doubted the probability of giving up the American veto. Britain insisted on a permanent American veto and lobbied for a veto of her own as well. The Germans and Italians opposed any national veto authority as this, in their view, would give them no more influence in nuclear decisions than they exercised before the MLF. They argued what the incentive to join the MLF was if they could not launch the weapons without American permission. Washington realized the truth of their claim and thus remained intentionally vague on the possibility of a majority voting formula without vetoes. The Working Group never fully resolved the voting formula. Instead, they left the issue open for the respective governments to negotiate immediately prior to a charter signing.

The Paris group also outlined a firing procedure for the missiles. They realized that it would require both a political and a military decision to launch the weapons. The political decision came via a vote by the members of the MLF Board of Governors based upon instructions from their governments. Once the political decision was made, SACEUR, having already targeted the weapons prior to a crisis, received permission to launch the weapons at his discretion. SACEUR would then send an encyphered message to the ship with the authentication code and the code necessary to activate the PAL on each missile. The ship would launch the missile soon after she receivied the firing authorization.

The Working Group also foresaw the necessity to plan procedures for dissolving the force. They agreed that the Charter could be changed at any time by a majority of the members, provided that no member contributing over ten percent opposed. The group intended an initial fifteen year commitment to the MLF Charter with an indefinite

extension after it expired. If a member country withdrew prior to the fifteen year point, a six month notification was required and it forfeited any claim to the assets of the force. If a member left after the initial fifteen year commitment, they would be entitled to reclaim any equipment they sold or provided for the force and receive a portion of the assets of the force according to their total financial contribution. If the force dissolved, the MLF personnel would return to their respective countries, the assets would be divided according to contribution percentages, and the warheads would be returned to the country who provided them.

The Military Sub-Group met for the first time on 18 October in Washington. The Paris Working Group tasked it with looking into the military details of the force; operational requirements, military personnel, military training, ship characteristics, construction criteria, logistical requirements, and the fleet commander organization. Furthermore, Paris asked the sub-group for a war gaming test of the MLF scheme. The Working Group also requested a recommendation from the Washington group regarding the feasibility of the MLF based on an analysis of all the specified areas. The Military Sub-Group returned in January 1964 with their final report. The members determined that the fleet should operate out of the Mediterranean Sea and eastern Atlantic Ocean and that the merchant-type ship plan was preferable to a cruiser or submarine force. They also revealed that in their war gaming experiment only seven out of the envisioned 25 ship fleet were neutralized by the Soviets in a conflict. Their report concluded that the current MLF scheme would be "viable, military effective, and credible under all situations envisaged."[18]

The Military Sub-Group also examined the possibility of a mixed manning

demonstration ship. Kennedy first suggested the idea on 13 July 1963 in National Security Action Memorandum 253. Bundy conveyed, "[The president] would like a prompt study and report of the feasibility of establishing an experimental mixed manned ship or ships in the 6th Fleet, for the purpose of testing the effectiveness of the mixed manned concept and also of showing the continued interest of the United States in progress on this front."[19] Kennedy's advisers returned with a favorable report on 26 August. He asked the State Department to investigate the willingness of the other NATO powers to conduct a mixed manning experiment. The Europeans approved of the idea, but preferred waiting for an analysis by the Working Group. The United States offered the Working Group a guided missile destroyer or an auxiliary ship for the demonstration. The Military Sub-Group approved of the experiment plan in a 25 October report and recommended conducting it on a destroyer for eighteen months. They preferred the destroyer because her complexity was analogous to that of a Polaris bearing ship, the quarters would be tight, which would accentuate cultural and ethnic problems, and the ship would operate at a high tempo which would be a good test of the mixed-manning concept. "The DDG is the only one which will provide a realistic and worthwhile test vehicle for the demonstration," justified the sub-group.[20] The sub-group hoped that the experiment would reveal the intricate and difficult issues involved with a mixed-manned vessel.

The State Department briefed Congress on the MLF late in 1963. United States participation in the MLF required Congressional action on two issues: the transfer of nuclear weapons and the assignment of American sailors to an international force. Washington was to be the primary warhead provider for the MLF, but the transfer of

nuclear weapons violated the Atomic Energy Act. The State Department saw three ways around it. Congress could either ratify an MLF treaty, authorize a executive agreement, or amend the Atomic Energy Act. The State Department was not concerned with the assignment of troops question because the solution merely involved making slight changes in American military laws. Regardless of what action the Administration chose to pursue for MLF ratification, support in Congress was necessary if the United States planned on taking part in the force. Merchant realized the importance of Congressional support and obtained White House approval in late November for "going forward with quiet consultations with Congressional leaders on the MLF."[21]

The progress of the Multilateral Force Working Group proceeded slower than the State Department expected. Merchant conceded on 21 November that the Working Group would not finish its work before the end of the year. The group was working its way through the various issues, coming to agreement on the ones they could, and setting aside the ones that were heavily contested. Finletter, the United States' representative to the Working Group, anticipated that the group would finish its first run through the issues before recessing at the end of December and would then return to the controversial topics upon reconvening in January. "It appears possible that the Working Group will be able to make a report to member governments by mid-February," speculated Merchant.

The assassination of John Kennedy on 22 November in Dallas pushed Lyndon Johnson into the Presidency and placed him in charge of the MLF affair. Rusk and Ball made a detailed presentation to Johnson early in December about the purposes and objectives of the MLF and informed him of its current status. They reassured the

president that no important decisions were needed at that time and requested his approval to continue Congressional briefing on the MLF. They also received Johnson's approval to discuss the status of the force with General Eisenhower. "This is highly important because bipartisan understanding and support will be essential for a treaty," advised Merchant, and "it would be disastrous if for lack of information [Eisenhower] should take an adverse stand which it then would be difficult for him to reverse."[22] Johnson had never spent much time with the MLF but approved Rusk's and Ball's recommendations largely out of respect for Kennedy's foreign policy initiatives.

An MLF delegation led by Merchant, Ricketts, and Smith visited Eisenhower at his California home on 15 January 1964. The group reviewed the objectives of the force with the general and then brought him up to date on its current status. Eisenhower was encouraged by the report and promised his support for the proposal "both publicly and privately."[23] They also shared some of the criticisms levied against the force with him, especially regarding its military usefulness. However the general urged establishing the MLF regardless of whether there was a military requirement for it. He believed that the political benefits alone made the force worthwhile. Before leaving, Merchant asked Eisenhower if he would express his support to members of Congress, and the general agreed.

The Johnson Administration made final arrangements in January 1964 for the demonstration ship, and the Navy chose the destroyer Biddle for the mixed manning experiment. The Americans were accompanied in the experiment by the Germans, Italians, Greeks, Turks, and Britons. The ship maintained an American commanding

officer, executive officer, and communications officer, and at least forty percent of the crew were Americans as well. The rest of the crew was composed of sailors from the other participating countries. The foreign crews began arriving in the United States in late Spring 1964 for training on the American systems prior to the demonstration's scheduled beginning on 1 July in Norfolk, Virginia.

Participation in the mixed-manned demonstration confronted Britain with another difficult choice. The British still had reservations as well as deep-seeded opposition within their government toward the MLF, yet they feared that abstention would leave them impotent in influencing the current Working Group negotiations. Conversely, if the exercise was a success, Heath worried, "we should find it hard to avoid undertaking a further commitment to a larger force."[24] Other British officials saw the demonstration as an opportunity to postpone a final decision. Wright, the Foreign Minister's private secretary, urged the Ministry of Defence to take this exercise seriously in as much as it "would not only gain us time but would also gain us credit in the American eyes."[25] As a result, Whitehall committed a crew of two officers and twenty-three sailors to the demonstration ship.

A potential naval manpower shortage became apparent before the demonstration got underway, and this became the next hurdle in Working Group negotiations. Both London and Bonn realized that committing the required personnel to the MLF would place a heavy burden on their own navies. The insistence on MLF personnel who were technically trained made the shortage even more acute. Earl Jellicoe; the First Lord of the Admiralty, alerted Thorneycroft on 30 January 1964 that "the manpower problems of the

ship-borne M.L.F. would be just as bad as the financial and material ones."[26] Meeting the manpower quotas for the envisioned twenty-five ship fleet required the German Navy laying up one destroyer squadron of three ships and the British laying up eight frigates. The many difficulties of the MLF were quickly becoming unacceptable to the British Minister of Defense who replied to Jellicoe that he was "not a bit surprised and this hardens my determination to try to prevent this absurdity if I can."[27]

Thorneycroft remained at the Ministry of Defense after Macmillan was succeeded as prime minister by Sir Alec Douglas-Home, who flew to the United States in February 1964 for talks with Johnson. Home confided to Johnson that Britain was still undecided about her participation in the MLF. He explained that Her Majesty's Government was still considering variations of a multilateral force, including land-based missiles and mixed-manned aircraft, and that until they explored these other options, Parliament would not support MLF. Home told Johnson that if the MLF "were now pushed by the American Administration we could not get the approval of Parliament, so it would be helpful if the President could cooperate in playing this long."[28] Johnson accepted that a British decision on the force could not be reached until after the elections in the Fall. He agreed not to push for a firm MLF commitment while Britain waited to see the initial results of the demonstration and the outcome of the October general elections.

Italian problems in preserving their coalition government confronted Rome with the same need for a delay as Britain. Merchant realized in February that the interested countries would not be ready for serious consideration of a commitment in the spring as had previously been hoped. Domestic political concerns in both Italy and Britain meant

that the MLF would be delayed at least until after the British elections in October. However, at the same time, Merchant looked ahead to the coming American election season that fall and realized that no one in Congress or the Administration would want to get bogged down in an MLF debate immediately before the elections. "We have ... a dilemma of moving fast enough in the US to avoid bringing the MLF to Congress in the midst of the late-year campaign season, on the one hand," complained Furnas, "and, on the other, to refrain from forcing the Italians to a point of firm decision before they can reasonably be expected to decide in favor."[29] He conceded that "there seems little possibility, therefore, of presenting an MLF charter to the US Congress this year."[30] The State Department had little choice other than to continue the Working Group forum as a way of preserving the MLF momentum. State also asked for White House approval to step up consultations with key Congressional committees. "Our own position with Congress needs to be bolstered," urged Furnas, "and consultations must be intensified to prepare the legislative branch for the day when they must take responsibility for MLF, both in drafting a charter and in ratifying it."[31]

During the first round of talks, the State Department's congressional briefing team had found members receptive to and enthusiastic about the MLF scheme. In each briefing, the congressmen heard the current status of the MLF, its background, the European feeling, the major attacks against the force, and its future. Most members ranged from supportive to neutral, with no one coming out in opposition. However, most reserved final judgement until they saw the force charter. Merchant valued the initial Congressional favor, but warned, "it should be realized, however, that since the subject has been put just

as a matter of information, reactions are not as keen as though it were a matter for action."[32]

Johnson first devoted significant attention to the MLF during a 10 April meeting at the White House. Ball and Finletter, due to the absence of Rusk and McNamara, briefed the president on the current status of MLF and expressed the need for strong presidential support. Finletter stressed to the president that "the U.S. had to stop being diffident about the MLF."[33] Johnson listened carefully to the recommendations, which were decidedly pro-MLF due to Ball's leadership of the briefing team. Harold Wilson, leader of the opposition in the British Parliament, characterized Ball as "a committed pro-European, indeed a fanatic for European unity, who was one of the most passionate advocates of the MLF."[34] Listening to the advice he received, Johnson stepped up American action on the MLF. He approved the State Department request for expanding Congressional consultations with individual members and relevant committees. He also directed that the Europeans be informed that the president endorsed the MLF, but warned that the State Department "should not shove it down their throats."[35] Furthermore, Johnson gave the State Department permission to pursue a MLF Treaty before the end of the year, a freedom never granted under Kennedy's regime.

Smith capitalized on the president's new initiative in his speech twelve days later at the United States Naval Academy's Foreign Affairs Conference. Smith used his address to communicate the elevated American crusade for an MLF agreement. Smith took over the State Department's MLF office following Merchant's resignation on 28 February and employed his Annapolis speech to establish his strong advocacy for the force. He began

by stating NATO's nuclear problems and revealing the possible alternatives. He then explained why the MLF provided the best answer. In his talk, he summarily raised each issue for which the MLF was designed as a solution and revealed how the MLF would answer it. He also offered arguments that repudiated the various criticisms levied against the MLF by its opponents. Smith was up-front about the possible negative consequences, but concluded, "If MLF can reduce the obstacles to European integration and Atlantic partnership that nuclear weapons nationalism is causing, it would be well worth its costs many times over." Smith's speech became a major American foreign policy statement on MLF that was referred to throughout 1964.

The approaching conclusion of the Paris Working Group and the impeding push for a treaty worried London. Many in Whitehall opposed the force and but realized the political cost of abstention. Unwilling to openly oppose it, London looked for a way to delay making a firm decision. Beginning in April 1964, the British recommended looking at additions to the Americans' surface ship plan, but taking care that their suggestions not be seen as "a diversionary move away from the multilateral force."[36] They understood that should the Germans and Americans discern their purpose, any opportunity for Britain to shape the force might vanish. The British suggested extending mixed manning to aircraft squadrons and MRBM forces in Europe. The delegation followed Lord Viscount Hood's advice that, "we shall find it easier if we suggest this as a variant within a wider M.L.F. rather than as a complete alternative to the American proposal."[37]

Washington realized that consideration of Britain's suggestions would significantly delay the signing of an MLF Charter. Finletter predicted in mid-April that the Working

Group would finish its work and have a final report completed by June. The representatives could then confer with their governments before moving on to drafting a formal treaty which could be ready by December. However, an introduction of new possibilities would only extend the duration of the Working Group, pushing back a treaty date, and clouding the entire force negotiations. Upon hearing of Shuckburgh's upcoming proposals, Smith cautioned, "To slow this schedule down in response to British suggestions will not only put the MLF off a year; it would also ... I believe, diminish rather than enhance the chances of British adherence."[38] The Americans perceived London's critical opinion of the force and suspected the British of using the suggestions as part of a political game to stretch out the MLF consideration until it lost its momentum and was abandoned. "The British may have a genuine interest in eventually multilateralizing Pershing and aircraft, but I suspect their main motive in now putting the idea forward is to divert and slow down MLF work," accused Smith.[39] Nonetheless, the United States did not want to appear indifferent to European input and thus promised American support for examining the suggestions so long as they be considered as additions not alternatives to the surface fleet.

Shuckburgh did not formally present the British proposals to the Working Group until 2 July. Unfortunately, this initiative came too late to carry much weight. Most allies had already accepted the American scheme as the shape the force would take. The British found that the Americans and Germans, with the most at stake, were directing the course of the talks and were unwilling to be sidetracked by alternatives. Shuckburgh told London that "it is primarily the German representative who is at present pressing the work

forward, though the American too shows some tendencies that way."[40] The other allies were pleased with the British suggestion, but the proposal of a surface ship force was too firm for the Working Group to be appreciably swayed by British suggestions. "The passage of time has severely eroded the possibility of a successful and useful British initiative," concluded John Thompson.[41]

Johnson held a decisive meeting with Erhard on 12 June in Washington. The men discussed the president's 10 April decisions and the renewed American push for an MLF agreement. Johnson informed Erhard that they were waiting for the results of the British election and giving the Italians time to shore up their coalition government in its support for MLF before moving ahead. The president also explained that he understood the need for completing the MLF agreement by early 1965 to avoid the German election season. Furthermore, he requested that Erhard continue providing positive influence to the British, Italians, and Dutch in favor of the MLF. The two leaders agreed before adjourning that "efforts should be continued to ready an agreement for signature by the end of the year."[42] The Washington Post suspected that "the year-end deadline was set informally to speed decisions and to initiate the treaty ratification process."[43] The State Department obtained presidential approval in April for a treaty by the end of the year, and it now had an international agreement for the same deadline. The Americans used these deadlines to accelerate the final drive for an MLF agreement.

The MLF cruised along smoothly through the summer months of 1964 as the Working Group continued to analyze the British alternatives in hopes of finishing by the early fall. Trouble hit suddenly following a British Labour Party victory in October and

the appointment of Harold Wilson as prime minister on the 16th. Labour was historically opposed to an independent British deterrent and favored making broad and deep cuts in defense estimates. Furthermore, Wilson spoke numerous times in opposition to the MLF during the previous term in Parliament. Italy also expressed concerns in October about their continued precarious political situation and stated that they would not be in a position to sign a charter before March 1965. With Britain's and Italy's participation wholly in doubt, the United States reasserted the importance it placed on establishing the force by the end of 1964. Rusk expressed America's continued support for the proposal several days later during a visit of the demonstration ship to Washington. The vessel "is not only tangible evidence of our earnest intent to proceed toward MLF," he declared. "This ship's company is living proof that NATO ships can be effectively manned by differing nationalities."

Some in the United States and Germany contemplated the possibility of a bilateral German-American MLF if the other NATO countries chose not to participate. Erhard hinted in January 1964, "If the M.L.F. came into being simply as a bi-lateral United States/German affair that would not be good, but in the long run it might be the only solution."[44] However the mere mention of such a proposal ignited harsh criticism from countries in both the East and the West, including inside the United States and Germany. Wilhelm Grewe, German Ambassador to NATO, met in Washington on 5 October for talks on the MLF. Grewe quickly discovered the opposition of McNamara and Bundy to a bilateral agreement. "I think that Grewe got a rather chilling impression of the 'bilateral' prospect from talks with Bundy and McNamara," reported Smith. Nonetheless, when the

allied support for MLF began fraying in the fall, Erhard was again asked about the chances of a bilateral agreement and he responded, "I can't give you a flat 'yes,' but I can't deny it."[45] The international community and the German press berated Erhard for his comment. The violent reaction forced clarification of his statement several days later by the German Foreign Ministry, "it was wrong to interpret the Chancellor's extemporaneous remarks of October 6 as implying that this force might become bilateral."[46] Most likely, Erhard used these bilateral comments for achieving a different goal. The Chancellor feared that the growing opposition and protest of France and Russia might cause the MLF to be abandoned if an agreement could not be reached quickly. He therefore hoped that "a tactic of 'prospecting' a US-German bilateral would nudge Italians, British and Dutch off fences."[47]

France initiated a new campaign against the MLF in late October. De Gaulle realized that the end of 1964 was a crucial time period in the MLF negotiations and that silent opposition might cost him dearly if the MLF was eventually formed. The increased discussion of a bilateral German-US MLF frightened him as well. Chip Bohlen, United States Ambassador to France, concurred, "The possibility of a German-American bilateral arrangement in this field triggered off new French opposition."[48] Paris used whatever leverage they had at their disposal to discourage adoption of the MLF by the NATO powers. Willy Brandt, Mayor of West Berlin, accused de Gaulle of going so far as to use "pressure over grain prices as a lever in his campaign against the multilateral force."[49] De Gaulle's behavior made it increasingly clear throughout Europe that a favorable decision for the MLF would result in an irreversible rift in relations with France.

Congressional support for the MLF began waning as well in the fall. As the time for the MLF charter ratification approached, members of Congress explored the proposal more carefully. Many started voicing the same concerns and criticisms heard in Europe throughout the previous four years; the force lacked military usefulness, it was detrimental to detente, it lent itself to charges of dissemination, and it placed Germany precariously close to nuclear weapons. Forty-two representatives joined in writing a letter to Rusk in early December which stated their apprehension about the MLF scheme. They requested delaying any American commitment until Congress reconvened in January so that the State Department could have a chance to answer their concerns. Congressman Chet Holifield, who became Chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy following the November 1964 elections, expressed his belief in October that it was "especially untimely and harmful to be engaged in promoting a new major nuclear force at a time when other nations were primarily interested in trying to make progress toward disarmament and the Soviets seemed possibly willing to make some concessions."[50]

The Working Group lost focus in the last several months of 1964. The Americans and Germans pushed for a draft charter realizing the small time window they had for ratification by their governments. However, the Working Group had not finished working through the British proposals and some countries disliked that they were being forced forward by the United States and Germany. The Working Group completed a preliminary version of a charter on 1 September and distributed it to the member governments for comment. They used these comments for composing a second draft of the charter in November. However, the Working Group was generating these draft treaties with the

knowledge that only Germany and the United States were prepared to commit to the force at that time. The Working Group continued to meet and discuss the MLF despite the doubtful participation of several members in the eventual force. "One country is perilously close to opposition to the MLF," asserted Farley, "and three others are highly nervous about being faced with a decision." The Paris Working Group began losing momentum as its members forgot their goals and objectives. "In the Working Group itself ... there is both genuine uncertainty as to how to proceed, and also a considerable sub-stratum of caution on the part of the participants who are fearful that their hands may be forced before long by the U.S. and Germany," observed Farley.[51]

The State Department heightened the pressure for MLF participation as the end of the year deadline approached. There was little doubt that the months of November and December 1964 would prove the pivotal months in the entire MLF endeavor. British participation in the force was nearly essential, yet they remained doubtful at best. Many pointed to Wilson's planned trip to Washington in early December as the probable climax of the MLF. No one knew what verdict would emerge, but they anticipated it being decisive.

Chapter Five

The increasing uncertainty and lack of direction in the MLF affair made the fall of 1964 a crucial time for the future of a NATO nuclear force. Many in Washington realized that the entire endeavor depended on the December talks between Johnson and Wilson. Britain was the most essential European member of the force, but also its most indecisive. However, a Labour Government replaced the old Tory Government in October and brought with it new ideas on nuclear issues that added flexibility to the previously deadlocked situation. The United States desperately needed British support for the draft charter as the December 1964 deadline was drawing close. Once the American presidential elections finished in November 1964, the Johnson Administration focused its attention on the MLF, and the upcoming negotiations.

Ball headed up a committee in early November 1964 tasked with studying the status of the MLF proposal in preparation for Wilson's visit in December. Known as "the Ball Council", this group worked through the few key issues that were holding up the Working Group. Ball's group rejected the British additions, as well as the possibility of submarines in the initial force because their added complexity would further extend the MLF negotiations. They also outlined the requirements for members to join the force and the possible options available to those countries debating participation. Their mission was to simplify the numerous issues surrounding MLF so that the Johnson Administration could make an intelligent decision about how to proceed.

Bundy also formed a special group to craft a negotiating position for the president. Ball, McNamara, and Rusk joined Bundy on this committee which met frequently in the

weeks preceding Wilson's visit and dealt with both the military and political factors involved with MLF. Johnson wanted Bundy to look at all the issues surrounding the multilateral force, and recommend a path for him to take with Wilson. "Detailed recommendations and proposals should be worked out for my consideration by the end of this month," he ordered, "so that there may be time for careful consideration and decision before my meeting with Prime Minister Wilson on December 7 and 8."[1]

Johnson personally took actions to assure a well-considered decision on the MLF. He issued National Security Action Memorandum 318 on 14 November which moved overall control of the MLF negotiations from the State Department to the White House and Bundy's NSC staff. "It is essential that this Government should be united, and accordingly it is my desire that all of the activities of this Government relating to the nuclear defense of the Atlantic Alliance should be fully coordinated among the White House, the State Department, and the Defense Department," he announced.[2] The president's decision to change MLF's venue was the result of strong urging by Bundy. Bundy was concerned about the influence of several State Department MLF advocates known as "the cabal." Bundy suspected these upper and mid-level officials who passionately believed in the MLF, including Ball, Smith, Furnas, and Finletter, of twisting the facts in favor of the MLF at home and misrepresenting the American position to foreign governments. "I wanted to see if the things the MLF cabal were telling us were right," Bundy explained.[3]

Bundy confirmed his misgivings after a personal investigation into the affair. He discovered that significant American arm-twisting was employed in generating MLF

support overseas and that the cabal consistently distorted European sentiments toward the force. Bundy first grew suspicious of the cabal back in June when word of American pressure tactics in Europe reached his ear. He hired Harvard Professor Richard Neustadt to investigate these rumors and the accuracy of the MLF reports sent to the White House by the State Department. Neustadt found that the cabal muffled Allied complaints of American coercive tactics and downplayed significant opposition to the MLF in Europe. It was difficult for Bundy to circumvent their influence since the MLF negotiations dealt primarily with international diplomacy and thus passed through the State Department. However, Bundy also feared giving the president poor advice based on misleading information from the cabal. Bundy avoided the cabal's domineering in the final months of 1964 by centralizing control of the MLF in the White House and by hiring Neustadt to assure that the committee work done by Ball's Council was free of the cabal's meddling.

Ball and Neustadt traveled separately to Bonn and London in November for discussions on the few remaining points of contention that were delaying an MLF agreement. Three central points emerged from these meetings. First, Britain wanted a nationally manned component of the force such as a bomber squadron in which they could participate rather than the surface fleet, but Germany demanded British participation in the mixed-manning portion. The Germans reasoned that otherwise the force would not be based on equality of all the members. Second, Germany sought a promise for future revisions in the voting formula. One of most attractive points of the MLF in German minds was the possibility of changing the voting formula several years after the force began. The Germans looked forward to the day when the American veto would be

removed and a majority voting system put into place. The Americans knew Bonn's opinion on this subject and remained purposely vague on the possibility of later revisions. However, the British, out of fear that the Germans might gain control over nuclear weapons, were emphatic that there must always be an American veto over the force. Third, the question of command could not be resolved either. The British wanted the force placed under its own NATO commander whereas the Germans preferred it to be at the disposal of SACEUR. Both Neustadt and Ball returned from their trips convinced that Wilson would have to be the one to compromise if the MLF was going to be formed.

The two men communicated the required British actions to Wilson during their London visits. Neustadt came to London for final arrangements prior to the prime minister's trip to Washington. In his discussion with Wilson, Neustadt insisted, "the success of the talks would depend on the acceptance of MLF."[4] Neustadt gave a further explanation to Healey later that day for the tough stand by Johnson. "The President's immediate problem was that he could not afford to be saddled with an apparent 'failure' of American policy towards Germany, such as the complete disappearance of the MLF might be represented to be," illuminated Neustadt.[5] However, Neustadt also offered, "The President might be prepared to settle for any solution that was acceptable to both the British and the Germans and could not be represented as a complete failure of the MLF policy."[6] Ball put forth an even stronger line with the prime Minister. "[Ball] made it clear that there could be no question of going back on the MLF, that the Americans would expect us to support it and that unless I was going to be in a position to say so, it would be better if I canceled my visit," recalled Wilson.[7] Ball's harsh words, not withstanding,

Wilson doubted whether such a hard line had been approved by the president. In any case, the inconsistent messages brought by Neustadt and Ball served only to cloud the true American stance from London. Wright complained, "too much of the recent toing and froing has smacked of lobbying by one interest or another."[8]

The high price of an MLF agreement became clear by November 1964. Establishing the nuclear force was sure to create a rift between the participants and France. De Gaulle vocally opposed the MLF and viewed the participation decision by the other NATO members as a choice between the United States and an American dominated alliance or France and European unity. Regardless of the outcome, it was clear that the cohesion of NATO would suffer. The MLF would also have ramifications in East-West relations. The Soviet Union feared the force and emphatically opposed placing nuclear weapons in German hands. They viewed the establishment of the force as a provocative measure by the West, but it was not altogether clear what Moscow might do about it. "The realization of such proposals would lead to rather grave consequences and would as an immediate result create a rapid deterioration of the international situation especially in Europe," they warned vaguely.[9] Despite these consequences, the United States and Germany pushed forward with MLF plans, convinced that the erection of the force would assuage the objections of France and Russia.

Britain grasped that their position on the MLF would most likely swing the tide. A favorable response could probably bring the force into reality while a negative answer would most likely crush any chances for an agreement. Wilson understood this and made the MLF a main topic of his Ministers Meeting at Chequers on 21-22 November. Wilson

campaigned in opposition to an independent British deterrent and in favor of making broad and deep cuts in defense estimates, but he quickly realized that nuclear weapons gave Britain an enhanced world position. This was too much for him to give up. Instead, Wilson sought a way to preserve the deterrent while reducing its cost and the defense estimates as well. Wilson considered it politically impossible to support the MLF in its present form since he campaigned against it before the elections. At Chequers, the British came up a counter-proposal to the MLF entitled the Atlantic Nuclear Force (ANF).

The British ANF plan differed only slightly from the MLF proposal, but solved several of the key criticisms that London had of the MLF. The British chose to enlarge the MLF concept by including V-bomber aircraft and Polaris submarines from the United States and Great Britain in addition to the previously conceived mixed manned surface fleet. However, the ANF did not require participation in the mixed manned surface fleet as a prerequisite for participation elsewhere in the force. In the case of the aircraft and submarines, the proposal called for collective ownership but national manning. The use of existing platforms prevented the requirement of building expensive new systems. Britain also pledged to commit her entire deterrent to this force in the hope that she would gain concessions within the North Atlantic Council for reductions in her expensive conventional force obligation to Central Europe. "Some reduction of the burden is essential ... since our economic strength is as important to oversea influence as our military power," illuminated Trend.[10] The British changed the command structure as well. The new ANF force would fall under a strategic NATO commander rather than SACEUR like arranged under MLF. The force proposal also contained a provision requiring every

member of the ANF to sign a non-acquisition agreement. The ANF scheme only varied little from the MLF in writing, but the small changes significantly altered the actual force.

The entire MLF affair began coming apart late in November 1964. Britain's participation, which became increasingly important as the opposition in France increased, was now wholly in doubt as Wilson made a speech in Parliament on 23 November perceived internationally as negative on the MLF. Europe had also picked up on disunity inside of Washington on the MLF. "Informed Europeans," revealed columnist Charles Barlett, "including French officials, are aware of a cleavage on this policy within the American Government."[11] The Europeans realized that it was not the Johnson Administration as a whole pressuring them into the MLF, but rather only a small number of diplomatic officials. Finally, it appeared increasingly likely that the MLF issue could not be completed before there would have to be another hiatus in the spring of 1965 for the German national elections. All these factors cast doubt on the future of an MLF agreement.

Wilson traveled to Washington seeking a meeting of the minds with Johnson. The MLF was a major point of contention between the two countries and Wilson wanted to diffuse the confrontation that was fast approaching. "The Prime Minister indicated that the visit to Washington would not be so much a negotiation as to have an informal exchange of views with the President about our plans for the future of the Atlantic Alliance," clarified Oliver Wright, Private Secretary for the prime minister.[12] Patrick Gordon-Walker, the British Foreign Minister, wanted "the opportunity to present our case on the M.L.F., and related problems in person to the President."[13] There was no hiding

the fact that many in the British Government were opposed to the MLF. Even Wilson pronounced, "Our position on the mixed-manned fleet was that we were against it on principle."[14] Nonetheless, London was convinced that they could make Johnson see their point of view.

The significant attention given to the MLF during the preparations for Wilson's visit alarmed Johnson. He did not realize the major foreign policy platform that the nuclear force had become in the preceding six months. Johnson was largely responsible for his own misconception. He spent the majority of 1964 preparing for his election campaign, and, over the several preceding months, discontinued his earlier regularly scheduled meetings with Rusk and McNamara weekly on foreign policy and defense issues. Momentarily placing a higher priority on his reelection, Johnson lost track over these months of both the MLF and the emerging crisis. The president finally grasped the urgency of the situation in late November and turned his attention toward forming a position on the MLF.

Ball assisted the president by composing a memorandum following his return from Europe which laid out a recommended course of action for the president. Ball received help on the memorandum from the unbiased Neustadt which added additional credibility to the recommendations. The memorandum urged the President to demand British participation in the mixed manning portion of the MLF, but to allow London to contribute additional nationally manned platforms if they wished. "British participation in surface ships is a sine qua non for the successful outcome of these talks," argued Ball.[15] They also suggested that the president might consider reducing the size of the fleet if Britain would

commit three Polaris bearing submarines to the force. Ball and Neustadt felt that such a move would reduce the financial strain that participation would place on Great Britain. Both advised a neutral course for Johnson in regards to the command question, but to make known the American preference for SACEUR. They concluded by cautioning Johnson to leave himself room so that he could let the entire MLF die without embarrassment to the United States if Wilson refused compromise.

Johnson met with McNamara, Rusk, Bundy, and Ball in the Oval Office on 5 December to discuss the upcoming talks with Wilson as well as Ball's memorandum. Johnson paid close attention to the discussion of MLF inasmuch as it was to be one of the major reasons for Wilson's visit. Ball summarized the issue and the state of the negotiations, but Johnson, having devoted little time to the proposal, questioned whether Ball was right to favor a strong American position with Wilson. With respect to NATO, Ball's argument was powerful, but the president wanted to consider other aspects of the matter. Not only was the MLF a major sticking point to a nuclear non-proliferation treaty with the Soviet Union, but also it was a major reason for the rift between Washington and Paris. And, Congressional opposition to MLF was significant. Johnson, a longtime Senate Majority Leader, knew that the MLF would be a tough fight, although not impossible. As Johnson added up the cost of MLF, he began doubting whether the case for American support of the MLF was as incontrovertible as he had been led to believe.

Johnson probed more deeply. What were the consequences of dropping the MLF, he asked. Specifically, would West Germany establish an independent nuclear deterrent? Instead of getting consistent predictions, Johnson received only widely disparate guesses.

When it was obvious that there was not a clear consensus, the president put the issue aside and moved onto the European support of the proposal. Again, Johnson could not obtain consistent, firm answers from his advisors. He realized that the European support for MLF was not as great as he had assumed. Johnson then sarcastically inquired as to why he should shove the MLF through Congress when the Europeans could not decide if they wanted it. Obviously annoyed at the situation, he postponed the final decision for a day.

McGeorge Bundy left the 5 December meeting concerned that Johnson had not heard both sides of the MLF story. Although a supporter of MLF, Bundy believed that, as National Security Advisor, it was his responsibility that the president had all the pertinent information. The next day he drafted a memorandum for the president entitled "MLF -- An Alternative View," outlining the criticisms of the MLF. He also attached a copy of a July 1963 memorandum from Kennedy which expressed reluctance at continuing to push MLF if the Europeans could not make up their minds whether they wanted it. Kennedy supported the MLF, but was unwilling to force it on the Europeans against their will. Kennedy's memo surprised Johnson who had pursued MLF primarily to maintain continuity with the late president's foreign policy.

Johnson spent 6 December examining the MLF issue on his own, asking in particular how much support there was on Capitol Hill. He worried over the possibility of a colossal Congressional defeat that would politically cripple both him and his domestic program for 1965.[16] "I don't want to be a Woodrow Wilson, right on a principle, and fighting for a principle, and unable to achieve it," pronounced Johnson, referring to President Wilson's embarrassing defeat with the League of Nations.[17] Several calls to key

members of Congress revealed extremely weak support for the MLF in both the House and Senate and this reinforced Johnson's caution.

Johnson summoned his advisors to the Oval Office late on the 6th. Armed with Bundy's memorandum and his calls to the Hill, Johnson berated Ball, McNamara, Rusk, and Bundy for their poor political judgement in advocating the MLF. The session became so heated that former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, a longtime Johnson confidante, chided Johnson: "Mr. President, you don't pay these men enough to talk to them that way - even with the federal pay raise."[18] Johnson announced that he would not press the MLF with Wilson as it made no sense to initiate a doubtful Congressional fight for the MLF when it had only lackluster support in Europe. His advisers protested, but Johnson's decision was firm.

Wilson arrived at the White House with his delegation on the morning 7 December. The two heads of state made short speeches at a West Lawn reception and then split off from their entourages and met privately throughout the morning. They spent their time together discussing various political issues affecting the two countries, but the MLF never came up. Presumably confused by the president's silence, Wilson raised the issue himself shortly after lunch. Wilson detailed the significant problems that he saw in the MLF plan; German association with nuclear weapons, a hurdle to growing detente, and opposition in Europe. He also highlighted numerous technical objections to the force, "none of them resolved by the test operation of the experimental mixed-manned surface force."[19] He concluded his position statement by giving Johnson a copy of Britain's ANF proposal and asking the president to examine it. Johnson replied that he would read it

overnight and share his reactions when they met again in the morning.

The original schedule for 8 December called for a 9:00 a.m. meeting among Rusk, McNamara, Healey, and Gordon-Walker at the British Embassy while Johnson and Wilson attended to individual obligations in Washington. The president and prime minister then planned to join up with their delegations at 11:30 a.m. in the White House for a series of afternoon talks. However, Johnson canceled the Embassy meeting early on 8 December and instead called McNamara, Rusk, Ball, and Bundy into the Oval Office for last-minute discussions on the way to proceed on the MLF-ANF matter. Johnson wanted a way for the Americans to avoid a political embarrassment if they let the MLF die. Ball made one last attempt at convincing the president to stick with the MLF, but Johnson was not interested. The Americans argued back and forth for several hours without agreeing on an escape procedure. The British delegation arrived at 11:30 a.m. and were led into the Cabinet Room to wait for the President and his party to join them. Johnson left the British waiting for nearly an hour before ending his Oval Office meeting with his personally devised strategy to let Wilson advocate his plan for the Atlantic Nuclear Force, listen politely, and then encourage Wilson to discuss his scheme with the Germans. He took the line that the United States would be wiling to support any force plan that Europe is united behind. Johnson stuck to his plan and Wilson followed along as the president had hoped. Over the course of the talks, Johnson, a mastermind of politics, shrewdly shifted the initiative and responsibility for the forming of a multilateral force onto the shoulders of Wilson and the British Government. Wilson returned from his trip claiming, "Clearly we had won the day," but history showed a more ambiguous conclusion.

The outcome of the Wilson visit relieved Johnson. He avoided a significant crisis on the MLF and instead passed the leadership of the issue on to the British. The president quickly set up measures to avoid having the situation revert back into American hands. Shortly after Wilson left, Johnson called a meeting with his advisers in which he clearly stated the rules for future MLF negotiations. The president forbade any further use of pressure tactics with the Europeans for coercing them into joining the force. His distributed National Security Action Memorandum 322 which contained his directives in writing. Furthermore, Johnson leaked a copy of the NSAM to James Reston of the New York Times during an interview on 20 December. The memorandum appeared the next day in the newspaper. Johnson hoped that making the NSAM public would prevent anyone from circumventing his directives. The president was also angry at the way the State Department had pursued the MLF issue and thus disbanded its MLF office headed by Gerard Smith, who resigned shortly before his position's demise.

Johnson's moves in December sent a shockwave through the NATO governments. The American lead in the MLF proposal had suddenly vanished. The Europeans welcomed the removal of pressure. They had complained for several years about American arm-twisting and it was now gone. No longer was MLF being rammed down their throats, instead Johnson opened the door for them to arrive at their own solution. However, it did not take long before the Europeans became concerned about the new situation. The United States was no longer advocating for a nuclear solution or for MRBMs in Europe. Johnson had left it up to them to devise a proposal for their own solution, but no one else had moved in and taken the leadership in developing a new plan

except the British with their ANF proposal. "Most ... appeared relaxed, relieved, or, in the case of France, pleased about the new situation, and no country seemed to jump into the breech caused by the withdrawal of US pressure." reported Thomas Hughes, the State Department's director of intelligence and research.[20]

The same Europeans that complained about American overbearance and pressure soon accused the United States of abandoning Europe. The general consensus in NATO following the Wilson visit was that the United States had lost interest in a NATO nuclear solution. Tyler informed Rusk of "a growing assumption in public opinion, and in certain political and governmental circles within the alliance, that we have just given up on the organization of the nuclear defense of the West, and are only paying lip service to the British proposals."[21] Even London griped, "the United States was washing its hand of the whole matter and taking the position that it was up to the UK and the FRG to work things out."[22] Washington gave assurances otherwise, but the Europeans now felt directionless and as if the problem demanded American leadership. "No movement was possible in the absence of US leadership," complained Schroeder.[23] Bonn and the Hague stressed the need for a clarification on Washington's new position.

The Johnson Administration answered the appeal with statements by Rusk and Johnson. Rusk addressed the issue in a message dated 15 January. He maintained, "We have not at all changed our views on the vital importance of the issues involved in the nuclear organization of the alliance."[24] He stressed that the United States wanted to be sure that the solution adopted had European support. "The United States should conduct itself," explained Rusk, "so that what emerges will clearly represent the views of the major

potential European participants and cannot justifiably be criticized as resulting from United States pressure upon reluctant European allies."[25] Johnson reaffirmed the continued American concern for a solution at his 16 January press conference when he stated that he looked forward to the results of Britain's discussions with Germany with the "greatest of interest."[26]

The American downplay of the MLF scheme frustrated the German leadership in Bonn. Erhard, Schroeder, and Von Hassel were strong advocates for the MLF within their government and spent a long time working on preparations for German parliamentary approval of the MLF. They welcomed the removal of deadlines but felt that Johnson's decision betrayed them and left them politically embarrassed. Doctor Hans Arnold, Deputy Chief of the NATO section in the German Foreign Affairs Office, reported that Bonn "was severely disappointed by the apparent US loss of interest in the MLF and was at a loss as to how to proceed now."[27] The British ANF offered some consolation, but Bonn preferred the MLF plan. Germany did not like the way the ANF scheme held the mixed manned surface fleet as a minor addition to the bomber and submarine force. The mixed manned fleet was the only nuclear force that Germany could participate in and was therefore the most important aspect to Bonn. They wanted it to be the central and primary component of any NATO nuclear force. Furthermore, participation in the surface fleet was optional with the ANF, and the British had already stated that they would not participate. The Germans considered British participation in the mixed manned portion vital in order to make the surface force respectable. In many ways, the Germans were looking to the MLF and ANF as ways of having nuclear equality with Great Britain, but if

Britain abstained from the surface fleet and only participated in the nationally manned portions, the Germans would continue to hold an inferior position to the British in the force. "The main British objective was to dispose of their nuclear force, especially the obsolescent V-bombers at a good price while at the same time diminishing the voice of the FRG in the arrangements," criticized Arnold.[28]

Johnson's MLF decision disappointed the Italians as well. Although Hughes revealed that in Italy, as in Germany, "some relief was expressed over the removal of 'pressures' and 'deadlines'," the Italians were not excited about the ANF.[29] They preferred the MLF scheme and criticized several aspects of the new ANF proposal. They objected to the minor role of the mixed manned surface fleet in light of it being their only participation in the nuclear defense. They also disliked that the force would not fall under SACEUR. Since SACEUR's mission was to defend Europe, they felt that he would not be as hesitant to use nuclear weapons to defend the continent in a conflict as some other commanders might be. The non-acquisition agreement also proved unacceptable to the Italians. They considered it unreasonable since it would mean binding themselves to something that no one outside of the ANF would be constrained by.

Great Britain formally introduced the ANF to the North Atlantic Council during the second week of January 1965. The British laid out plans for meeting bilaterally with interested NATO members to determine the possibility of an agreement and the best way to proceed in the negotiations. The Americans had doubts about the possibility of the ANF owing to the many complications encountered previously with the MLF. "There is a conviction in some quarters of Washington," revealed Richard Davis, Deputy Assistant

Secretary of State for European Affairs, "that the probability is growing that the time will never be right fort he necessary number of governments to take action to bring an ANF/MLF into being, however desirable it may be on merits."[30] Bundy perceived this danger too and warned, "I wonder whether we should not ask ourselves a few hard questions about the whole MLF concept before we agree to any serious multilateral discussions this spring and summer."[31]

The secretary of defense's speech on 18 February reemphasized the American Government's endorsement for an Allied nuclear force approved by Europe. "The basic concept of an Allied nuclear force has the full support of our Government since it will advance the principle and practice of collective strategic defense as against the proliferation of separate nuclear deterrents," promised McNamara.[32] However, McNamara adamantly maintained that it must be a unifying and not divisive. "We do not intend to enter into any general agreement respecting the nuclear defense of the Atlantic Alliance which does not take account of the legitimate interests of all of our European allies, including France."[33] He encouraged Europe that there were no timetables or deadlines to worry about and that they should continue to work diligently on a force that would unite the Alliance.

Wilson originally planned for talks with Erhard on 22 January 1965, but they were rescheduled to 6 March due to Winston Churchill's death in January. Prior to this March meeting, Johnson's advisers inquired as to whether the president intended on sending a message to the two heads of state stating his support for a NATO nuclear force. Johnson declined because he did not want to place any American pressure on the talks.

Furthermore, Johnson reasoned that it was unnecessary because both Wilson and Erhard knew his position on the issue. The president also pointed out that "unless the situation changes sharply as a result of the meeting in Bonn, it was very unlikely that there will be any prospect of agreement before the German elections."[34] Johnson hoped to observe the outcome of a negotiation where no American pressure was involved. He envisioned this as an accurate test of where the Europeans stood on a NATO nuclear force.

Wilson arrived in Bonn on 6 March eager for discussions on the future of a NATO nuclear force. Wilson initiated these talks in response to Johnson's suggestion in December that he seek the German opinion on the ANF plan. The Germans expressed their preference for the old MLF plan rather than the new ANF proposal. Although Erhard conceded that the MLF had lost all momentum, he maintained that the MLF scheme aligned closely with German desires for a force and that, "the basic German position was ... unchanged."[35] Erhard wanted a strong surface fleet of at least twenty ships, the force to be under SACEUR's command, and there to be one American vote and one European vote on firing. Great Britain wanted a force in which "NATO would not be divided; The deterrent would be workable in emergencies and should be seen to be workable; There would be the least likelihood of suspicions on the other side of the Iron Curtain."[36] The two countries reached an agreement at the end of the talks on beginning discussions with interested countries to merge the MLF and ANF plans so that the force could be shaped to the desires of its members. Wilson assured Erhard that the discussions would proceed at a slow pace until after the German national elections that fall and that he would not "impose a timetable on the FRG as some had at one time sought to impose on

the UK."[37] The talks adjourned on 9 March with the two leaders declaring "the readiness of their governments to carry forward in the Paris Working Group together with all interested governments, the discussions on multilateral organization of nuclear forces with the Alliance in the light of both of the work already done in Paris and of the British proposals which have subsequently been made."[38]

Johnson explained his new strategy for a NATO nuclear force to Italian Prime Minister Moro at a meeting on 21 April. "The United States had no desire to dominate Europe," clarified the president, but, "on the other hand, our desire to avoid telling Europeans how to run their lives should not be interpreted as a lack of interest in European developments."[39] Johnson wanted the Europeans leaders to think about their own problems and devise solutions that they wanted. Furthermore, the president revealed that he was having problems with Congress and that he needed more time before an ANF or MLF treaty could be pushed through the House and the Senate. Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance added later that day, "we continue to believe this to be a worthwhile goal, but we want it to be based on agreement among a majority of European powers."[40]

The NATO Permanent Representatives from Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States met on 19 March and 22 April for discussions on reconvening the Paris Working Group. The representatives agreed to reconvene on 5 May with negotiations proceeding at a decelerated tempo until after the German elections. Tyler supported the Working Group strategy. "The procedure of continuation of talks in the Working Group represented a useful and sensible way of trying to keep momentum in the exercise as a whole, at least on the surface, even though we knew no fundamental

progress could be achieved until after the German elections," he applauded.[41] Evelyn Shuckburgh, British Ambassador to NATO, was not as positive on the decision. "It is clear that if we were not pressing for these talks today, no other government would be doing so," she complained.[42] Furthermore, she questioned the usefulness, "for the rest of the year at any rate, there will be no keenness on the German side and it does not look like President Johnson was prepared to throw his weight in."[43]

Everyone involved in the Working Group understood that an agreement required concessions from each country involved. Spiers wrote a paper in the summer of 1965 which outlined the actions necessary by each participant for a charter signing. Great Britain must permit joint ownership and mixed manning of its Polaris bearing submarines, join in the mixed manned surface fleet, and give up a British veto in favor of a single European vote and a single American vote. Germany would be forced to sign a non-acquisition treaty, pay for part of the British submarines, and accept a mixed manned surface fleet of only thirteen ships. The United States must stand up to de Gaulle's opposition, contribute a few US submarines on a rotating basis whereby one or two would always be on station, and arrange a system of consultation between the nuclear targeting and control of the American and ANF deterrents. Although the concessions appear large and numerous, Spiers, concluded that an agreement was not impossible. "All the specific issues are soluble, though not without difficulty."[44]

The German willingness to enter ANF negotiations on the eve of national elections perplexed many in NATO. Most countries had previously backed off of MLF discussions prior to national elections to avoid a potentially divisive political issue. However, the

Germans followed a different course because they had a different objective. German reunification and the continued occupation of West Berlin topped the list of Bonn's political priorities. Erhard understood the Soviet fear and hostility towards a NATO nuclear force and knew that as long as one was being debated, it remained as a valuable German bargaining chip with the Soviet Union. Bonn continued pursuing the MLF and ANF partially because of the added leverage it gave in discussions with Moscow on German reunification. Erhard would have undoubtedly given up any NATO nuclear force agreement in exchange for a united Germany. German Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Horst Groepper insisted, "A renunciation by Bonn of all MLF-type plans and of the acquisition of nuclear weapons must be sold to the Russians for the price of concessions in the German question."[45]

McNamara introduced a new alternative for solving NATO's nuclear problems to the NATO defense ministers on 31 May. He laid out a plan for a special committee within the Alliance for nuclear strategy and planning. McNamara reasoned that if one of the principle objectives behind a NATO nuclear force was increasing the participation of the whole alliance, then a committee which gave every ally input into the nuclear deterrent would solve much of the problem. In his committee, the allies would all work together arranging nuclear targeting, but they would not control the actual weapons or their firing. NcNamara's idea did not satisfy Schroeder who wanted German association with the hardware, especially if his country would be asked to denounce the acquisition of their own deterrent force. "Germany would accede to a nuclear non-dissemination agreement only if an atomic organization within the Western alliance is established ... a multilateral

nuclear force or something similar ... McNamara's suggestion of a Select Committee does not constitute an adequate alternative."[46]

The prospects of an eventual NATO nuclear force agreement grew dim in the summer of 1965 as the allies lost interest in the idea. Johnson, distracted by the war in Vietnam, did not mention the issue during Erhard's visit to Washington in June 1965. The British disenchantment revealed itself in the visit of the MLF demonstration ship to England that same month. The destroyer Ricketts, formerly the Biddle, now renamed in honor of the late VCNO, a key American champion of the MLF, moored for several days and Wilson snubbed it with "no less and no more attention than normal courtesy requires."[47] The Foreign Office in London went even farther and asked the American Embassy "to ensure that the captain of the Claude V. Ricketts plays the whole visit in a low key and makes no mention of the multilateral force in anything he says to the press."[48]

The summer of 1965 saw the increased possibility of a non-dissemination treaty between the East and the West. The Johnson Administration eagerly anticipated an agreement, but the Soviet Union kept stalling the issue with complaints over the NATO nuclear force proposal. Washington saw two options. The United States could either pursue the ANF with the hope that the Soviets reconsider their opposition once they saw the force operating or they could agree to give it up in exchange for a non-dissemination agreement with Moscow. The State Department's Policy Planning Council's Board of Consultants agreed that for a non-dissemination treaty, the Soviets "have made clear that [MLF] is their price."[49] Germany sought a non-dissemination agreement too, but

reunification was their price. "Should the Soviet Union be prepared to agree to--as we desire and hope--decisive and irrevocable steps toward the reunification of Germany in freedom, the question of security would take on a different aspect. The adherence of a united Germany to a world-wide [non-proliferation] treaty would be possible," declared Schroeder.[50]

The Working Group met throughout the summer as it negotiated agreeable terms for a NATO nuclear fleet. It reconvened the Military Sub-Group on 13 September under the chairmanship of American Admiral Walter Small and charged it with investigating the military technicalities of the proposed force. The Working Group asked the members of the sub-group for assessments of the expected life span of the V-bombers, the optimum size of the surface fleet, the feasibility of mixed manning on UK submarines, the possible force mixes of the ANF and their costs, and the security of the weapons systems. The sub group was also asked for recommendations on the military command structure of the force. The Working Group requested the results as soon as possible, but John Leddy, US Ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris, predicted, "It is expected that the Military Sub-Group will go on meeting for two months or more."[51]

McNamara's new committee for nuclear strategy and planning met for the first time on 27 November 1965. Officially named the Special Committee of NATO Defense Ministers, Vincent Baker defined its purpose, "the Special Committee was to make recommendations to the NAC on improved communication and consultation arrangements rather than itself perform a consultative function." The committee had nothing to do with

a NATO nuclear force, but McNamara hoped that it would provide the nuclear role for their allies that the MLF and ANF had not been able to.

Erhard renewed his support for MLF following his October victory in the German national elections. Although his support wavered initially after the election, Schroeder and Von Hassel convinced him of the necessity of some sort of NATO nuclear force. However, by the end of 1965 it was obvious that Germany was the only country still seriously considering some sort of a multilateral force. The demonstration ship Ricketts ended its trial period on 1 December but was given little fanfare or press coverage. The tide within the NATO countries had shifted due to the divisiveness and tensions that the force created. Rumors also surfaced late in the year that Great Britain was contemplating abandoning the ANF for a non-dissemination pact with Moscow. Furthermore, Erhard met with Johnson in December and they discussed the nuclear problems of the Alliance, but Erhard returned to Germany convinced that the multilateral force issue had been indefinitely shelved in Washington. German Press Secretary von Hass felt that due to the United States' involvement in Vietnam, "the main interest of the Americans at present is not how to solve the nuclear problems of the Atlantic alliance."[52] The push for a NATO nuclear force had clearly collapsed. Within the next year Germany too turned its attention elsewhere as an economic crisis and uncertain domestic politics took center stage. The MLF/ANF idea never died, it simply faded away from political discussion. It was not until April 1967 that Theo Summers, writer for Foreign Affairs, pronounced confidently, "The M.L.F. idea of nuclear cooperation and co-determination [had] finally been buried."[53]

Chapter Six

Complexity and confusion attended the MLF issue from the start. The upshot was a lengthy, convoluted, multinational negotiation that engendered even greater complication and was memorialized in a mountain of documentation. Alone, "the records of the MLF Working Group and its military, legal, and technical subgroups comprise cubic yards of material," recalled American diplomat Robert von Pagenhardt.[1] The small number of accounts of the MLF is scarcely surprising given the intricacy of the issues involved, and this may explain why the accounts vary so widely and contradict one another at key points. "Without question," attested nuclear historian Catherine Kelleher, "the causes and contradictions of the MLF proposal are too starkly formulated and hardly acceptable to conclusive verification even through the mills of history."[2] However, some features of the MLF are now clear.

The Eisenhower Administration purposed the MLF to answer the "nuclear dilemma" confronting NATO. Robert Bowie briefly outlined the scheme in August 1960 as part of a much larger report on NATO's future, and Eisenhower seized on the idea and embraced it. The missile fleet appeared to be a satisfactory solution to four somewhat related problems: proliferation, German nuclear aspirations, distrust of the American defense pledge to employ nuclear weapons to defend Europe, and SACEUR's MRBM demand. Eisenhower accorded significant priority to the scheme and had it presented to NATO before his Administration expired. However, when Herter introduced the MLF plan in December 1960, the Europeans expressed little interest.

The MLF received casual attention from the Kennedy Administration during its

first two years. Washington expressed its willingness to form the force, but made little attempt to push the Alliance to accept the plan. Kennedy revived the MLF proposal at the Nassau Conference in December 1962 and placed it back at center stage. However, the language of the Nassau Communique was sufficiently broad and ambiguous when it came to the MLF that it created confusion over the actual terms, and this dogged the push for British participation. Disputes over the platforms, the timeline of implementation, the firing formulas, and the obligation to participate all emerged owing to the ambivalence of the agreement. "The drafters outdid themselves in masterly ambiguity," mused historian Arthur Schlesinger, then a Kennedy aide.[3] Despite its problems, the Nassau Conference gave new life to the MLF which thereafter was advanced as a major foreign policy objective of the Kennedy Administration.

Washington pursued a speedy agreement on the MLF during the first half of 1963. However, American diplomats, and Kennedy himself, soon learned that the European support was not as strong as they once hoped and that the MLF, while appearing reasonable on paper, raised serious complications in practice. It was clear that they did not have the necessary backing in Europe to sign a charter in 1963; the European allies were asking for more detailed discussions regarding many of the more complicated aspects of the force. MLF supporters in the governments of both the United States and Europe continued negotiations in the Paris Working Group as a way of discussing the complex issues of the force and maintaining momentum.

Paradoxically, the product of the Paris Working Group undermined rather than enhanced the prospects for an MLF agreement. The Working Group gave the British,

whose opposition to the force grew throughout the proposal's lifespan, a venue to propose alternatives to the MLF which delayed the Working Group for over six months in 1964. The Working Group exceeded its three month scheduled duration by an entire year and this proved detrimental to the MLF proposal. The fifteen month span allowed the MLF to get bogged down in drawn out negotiations and redundant analyses. The delay also gave those opposing the MLF a chance to develop shrewd criticisms of the flaws in the scheme and permitted these criticisms to be heard and contemplated carefully. The proposal got caught up in the military and diplomatic bureaucracies of the interested countries during the delay and this slowed decision making and arrested much of the momentum generated by Nassau. The countries of Western Europe emerged from the Working Group more unhappy with the MLF than when they had entered the negotiations in October 1963.

The climax to the MLF affair came in Harold Wilson's December 1964 talks with Lyndon Johnson in Washington. For four years, the Americans had pushed MLF among its NATO allies with limited success, the most formidable hindrance to a multinational agreement being the Tory Government's procrastination and unwillingness to make a formal commitment to the fleet. However, a different situation faced the Americans by the end of 1964. A new Labour Government replaced the Conservatives in the October general elections and Washington believed that Harold Wilson, the new prime minister, might be more malleable than his predecessor. The MLF stood out as a major point of contention in the Anglo-American relationship in 1964 and both sides knew that the issue would arise during the summit. Until the weekend before the prime minister's arrival, it

appeared certain that Wilson was going to have MLF participation forced upon him by Johnson. However, in a series of last minute decisions, the president backed off of this longstanding foreign policy initiative at the very moment of fruition.

Explanations of Johnson's change of heart are varied. Some claim it was domestic politics, some that he was following Kennedy's wishes, and others that he was opening a path for improved relations with France and Russia. "It is unlikely that either the complete written record or candid testimony by close advisers of the President would completely resolve this issue," judged political scientist John Steinbruner.[4] Most likely was that all of these reasons were influencing factors in his final verdict. The president saw many negative consequences of forming the MLF and very few positive ones. Whatever his reasoning, Johnson's decision represented "the end of MLF."[5]

Britain never embraced the MLF despite Macmillan's agreement to the Nassau formula. The issues of cost, administration, partisan politics, national history, and trade policy shaped London's position and the approach of her diplomacy. Crafty and stubborn independence characterized Britain's response to MLF, and, in part, this caused the eventual abandonment of the plan. While these were the most evident reasons, David Schwartz suggested an even more selfish motive, protection of Britain's special relationship with the United States on nuclear matters. "Any arrangement the United States might pursue with other European powers that would reduce the uniqueness of this relationship were to be looked on with jealousy and suspicion," argued Schwartz. The British understood the importance the Americans placed on the German question and realized that the MLF would significantly strengthen the ties between Bonn and

Washington on nuclear issues. Britain's consistently critical view of the MLF and delaying tactics were undoubtedly affected by its awareness of this truth and support Schwartz's claim.

The British proposed alternatives to the Working Group which they claimed would increase MLF's effectiveness. The United States believed that these alternatives, later fully articulated in the ANF plan, were more a British move to kill the MLF than a legitimate attempt to configure a force. The ANF scheme embodied only slight modifications of the MLF plan, yet Britain insisted that it be considered. British Minister of Defence Peter Thorneycroft later confessed that "the only engagement which this nuclear force [the ANF] has ever been in was to sink the M.L.F. and that was apparently successful."[6] The ANF effectively distracted the interested NATO powers from the MLF and increased the complexity of the necessary decisions. The result was that likely participation not only had to decide between two different forces, but also to work through the difficult issues posed by the MLF. British military historian Lawrence Freedman argued that, "as intended, the effect of the British proposal for the ANF was to deprive the MLF of any momentum it might have had."[7]

European support for the MLF appeared substantial at times, but opponents of the force argued that these endorsements were the fruit of the American pressure rather than genuine approval of the scheme. They asserted that the countries expressed interest primarily to get on good terms with the United States rather than from a belief in the answers offered by the MLF. These accusations resulted from the pressure tactics employed by the United States. "Visiting missions, repeated briefings, elaborate study

groups, trials at sea - all were employed to affix not only the American seal of approval but also the mark of 'what the United States wants'," explained Catherine Kelleher.[8] The European members of NATO no doubt sensed pressure to this end which proved powerful incentive to join the force. Henry Kissinger, then a Harvard professor, claimed that "outside the Federal Republic there is not one country whose agreement to the MLF represents anything more than acquiescence in American pressure."[9]

The small group of highly devoted MLF advocates in the State Department, known as "the cabal", played a leading role in the negotiations. Regardless of the European attitudes, these functionaries, under the patronage of Undersecretary Ball, continued pushing the MLF vigorously throughout Europe. The showdown over MLF in December 1964 exposed both the Administration's ignorance of their work as well as their ability to direct the course of the MLF proposal within the American Government. They were able to keep it alive in America through a hard-sell campaign to the White House and members of Congress. These officials were willing to go to great lengths to preserve the American support and pressure for the plan. Alastair Buchan revealed "the pressure exerted by the presence in the State Department of a small number of senior officials who had early made up their minds that the multilateral solution was the correct one, and who have since displayed degree of missionary zeal, not normally to be found in diplomatic offices, to convert ... others to their view."[10] Their autonomous ability to keep the issue alive is an interesting demonstration of the power of the bureaucracy in the United States. "In ways that presidents, secretaries of state, and even bureaucrats themselves may only dimly perceive," diplomat John Campbell explained, "the machine has indeed come out of

control."[11] Campbell described a State Department and foreign policy under Dean Rusk that was almost completely unconstrained due the size of the bureaucracy. The story of the MLF clearly supports his argument. A small number of devoted individuals were able to pursue a course of American foreign policy relatively free from the president's knowledge. Philip Geyelin offered a theory along the same line as to why MLF endured. He argued that in a large government, "a rich variety of motives, and evangelical zeal are almost essential to propel anything controversial or revolutionary ... up to the bureaucratic peaks. For the same reason, a project once embedded in high policy is almost as difficult to dislodge."[12]

Many of MLF's supporters in the United States believed satisfying German aspirations to be the most important reason to establish the force. They discerned German dissatisfaction with its non-nuclear status and worried that an independent German deterrent was a distinct possibility someday. They viewed MLF as a way of sharing nuclear weapons which they hoped would staunch German nuclear aspirations. They dismissed the criticisms of the MLF by measuring its worth in preventing a Germany armed with nuclear weapons. However, in retrospect, the German position was misunderstood. German specialist John Zedler accused the advocates of the MLF of "a misreading of German aspirations."[13] Undersecretary Ball, a principle patron of the MLF, admitted that he had "no doubt overestimated the effect on the German people of permanent exclusion from the management of nuclear weapons."[14]

The final and most difficult question attending the MLF are the reasons for its failure. There are numerous explanations given by participants, all of which make some

sense. Ball thought that "in the end the MLF failed for want of enthusiastic European support."[15] Secretary Rusk believed that "what ultimately doomed the MLF was the inability of the Europeans themselves to unite behind the multilateral force."[16] Defense official Enthoven held that MLF failed because "in attempting to work out the detailed arrangements, it became clear that such proposals raised impossible problems regarding political sovereignty and military command."[17] Ironically, Lyndon Johnson suggested the most likely explanation, "allied diplomats and military leaders concluded that a joint nuclear force was not essential to the vitality of NATO, and that trying to work out details of such a force might be more divisive than unifying."[18] The MLF was such a complicated topic that it is difficult to offer a simple explanation. However, it is clear that the force's complexity, divisive effects within the Alliance, possible harm to a non-dissemination agreement, damage to detente, and high cost were all factors which contributed to its demise. According to Enthoven, the MLF affair was "an expensive and time consuming detour on the road to a more effective system of political and strategic planning among the Western allies," namely Flexible Response.[19]

Enthoven's point was correct, yet incomplete. The MLF revealed a deeper truth that was often easily overlooked. While in reality, it was a failure of American diplomacy and a disappointing attempt at nuclear cooperation, the MLF revealed important truths about the NATO alliance and its role in the Cold War. Long after the demise of the MLF, the Cold War ended when NATO triumphed over the Warsaw Pact. One major reason for this was that, over time, NATO proved to be a stronger, more robust alliance than its opponent. The case of the MLF scheme illustrates why this was so. NATO joined like-

minded democracies. Unlike the Warsaw Pact, the strongest NATO power simply could not impose policies on its allies. The United States sought an agreement on the proposal but could not establish the force without the agreement and support of several key allies. NATO adapted policies as a result of persuasion and consensus, not coercion. Washington relied on discussion and debate to convince its allies to participate in the force. This meant that plans, such as the MLF, to strengthen NATO were subject to the democratic politics of each ally. The case of the MLF illustrated the workings of an alliance that was healthy and efficient; it dismissed impractical schemes, even those advanced by the center, however innovative and theoretically useful. The United States freely allowed France to oppose the force and persuade other members of NATO to do the same. At no point did Washington consider anything more than persuasion to change the French position or promote participation in the force by the rest of the Alliance. To make the most stark contrast as between the rival alliances, whereas military coercion, or its implicit threat, was a major feature of Soviet dealings with the Warsaw Pact powers, it played no role whatsoever among the NATO nations, and indeed was unthinkable. Each ally was permitted to voice its opinion free of fear of retribution. By contrast, Moscow devised nuclear strategy and imposed policy on its allies, and supposed opposition to be treacherous. This difference proved pivotal in deciding the outcome of the Cold War.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES

CAB	Cabinet Files, Public Records Office, Kew Gardens, England
DEFE	Ministry of Defence Files, Public Records Office, Kew Gardens, England
FO	Foreign Office Files, Public Records Office, Kew Gardens, England
NA	National Archives II, College Park, MD
PREM	Prime Ministers Files, Public Records Office, Kew Gardens, England
PRO	Public Records Office, Kew Gardens, England
USNA	Nimitz Library, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD

NOTES

Chapter One

1. Quote is from John M. Lee, Robert von Pagenhardt, and Timothy W. Stanley, To Unite Our Strength: Enhancing the United Nations Peace and Security System (Lanham, Maryland : University Press of America ; Washington, D.C. : International Economic Studies Institute, 1992), p. 92.

The principal British sources -- indeed nearly the only useful sources – for this paper are the Prime Minister's Files, Public Records Office, Kew Gardens, London (PRO); Cabinet Files, PRO; Ministry of Defense Records, PRO; and Foreign Office Records (FO), PRO. The prime minsters' views may be found in Harold Macmillan, At the End of the Day, 1961-1963 (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Harold Wilson, A Personal Record: The Labour Government, 1964-1970 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971); Alec Douglas-Home, The Way the Wind Blows (New York: Quadrangle, 1976); and Harold Wilson, A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers (New York : Summit Books, 1977). Nearly a primary source -- considering the author's complete access to his subject's papers and many years of interviews -- is the definitive biography, Alistair Horne, Harold Macmillan (New York: Viking, 1989). Richard Howard Stafford Crossman, The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister (New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), provides a look inside Labour cabinet politics. Royal Navy policy may be found in the authoritative Eric Grove, Vanguard to Trident: British Naval Policy Since World War II (Annapolis, Md. : Naval Institute Press, 1987); the only well-documented biography of the Chief of Defense Staff is Philip Ziegler, Mountbatten (New York: Harper and Row, 1985). The only secondary work dealing with the topic of this paper, informed by archival research in some British records and more newly released NATO Military Committee files, is Beatrice Heuser, NATO, Britain, and France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000 (New York: St Martin's, 1997).

The background was informed by Department of State Central Decimal Files, National Archives II, College Park, Maryland; Oral Histories, U.S. Naval Institute Collection, Nimitz Library, USNA; and Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS): 1961-1963, Vol. XIII: West Europe and Canada (Washington, GPO, 1994); FRUS: 1963, Vol. VII: Arms Control and Disarmament (Washington: GPO, 1995); and FRUS: 1964-1968, Vol. XIII: Western Europe Region (Washington: GPO, 1995). Some contemporaneous public policy statements on MLF may be found in Public Papers of the Presidents (PPP): John F. Kennedy (Washington: GPO, 1964), and PPP: Lyndon B. Johnson (Washington: GPO, 1964). The presidents' views may be found in Robert D. Ferrell, ed., The Eisenhower Diaries (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981); Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971). Kennedy is remembered in a memoir and account of his presidency, Arthur M. Schlesinger, A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965). Robert Bowie, an official of Eisenhower's National Security Council staff, wrote the first MLF proposal. See

Robert R. Bowie, Shaping the Future: Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964). The views of other principals are recorded in Dean Rusk, As I Saw It, ed. Daniel S. Papp (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990); Anatoly F. Dobrynin, In Confidence : Moscow's Ambassador to American's Six Cold War Presidents, 1962-1986 (New York: Random House, 1995); Charles de Gaulle, Major Addresses, Statements, and Press Conferences, May 19, 1958-January 31, 1964 (New York: French Embassy, Press and Information Division 1964); Charles de Gaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor (New York: Simon and Schuster 1971); George W. Ball, The Past Has Another Pattern (1st ed.; New York: Norton, 1982); Deborah Shapely, Promise and Power (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1933); John M. Lee, Robert von Pagenhardt, and Timothy W. Stanley, To Unite Our Strength: Enhancing the United Nations Peace and Security System (Lanham, Maryland : University Press of America ; Washington, D.C. : International Economic Studies Institute, 1992). The Defense Department's attitudes may be sampled in Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith. How Much Is Enough? (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1971). Highly detailed, and based on still-classified material, this history is essential for an understanding of the origins of the MLF plan: Robert J. Watson, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Vol. IV: Into the Missile Age, 1956-1960 (Washington: GPO, 1984).

Only a few secondary sources deal in any detail with the MLF. Its origin is discussed briefly in Robert A. Wampler, "Ambiguous Legacy: The United States, Great Britain and the Foundations of NATO Strategy," (Unpubl. Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1991). Political Scientist John Yoo argues that it was American congressional politics and domestic programs that persuaded Johnson to let MLF die in John Choo Yoo, "Three Faces of Hegemony: Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and the Multilateral Force" (Unpubl. Honors Thesis, Harvard University, 1989). A contemporary account, which claimed to be "historical" but which was published at the height of the transatlantic debate, is Alastair Buchan, The Multilateral Force: An Historical Perspective (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1964). Other studies based wholly on secondary sources include John N. Zedler, The Multilateral Force: A Misreading of German Aspirations (Los Angeles: [Security Studies Project] University of California, 1968); David N. Schwartz, NATO's Nuclear Dilemmas (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1983).

Other secondary sources that proved useful include Robert W. Love, History of the U.S. Navy (Vol. 2; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1992); John D. Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974); and Philip L. Geyelin, Lyndon B. Johnson and the World (New York: Praeger 1966).

2. Schlesinger, Thousand Days, p. 850.

3. Bowie, Shaping Future, p. 71.

4. The MLF affair highlighted a strong contrast between the functioning of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The Warsaw Pact was led by the Soviet Union who regularly imposed its

will on its allies with little regard for their opinions. The Soviets rarely discussed their plans within the alliance. If they did, the Russians expected the support of the allies and would not tolerate opposition. The case of the Cuban Missile Crisis is an example of a costly political blunder by the Soviet Union which could have been avoided by consultation within the Warsaw Pact. NATO and the Warsaw Pact clearly functioned differently. NATO cultivated healthy working relationships among its members and promoted an atmosphere of open discussion, while the Warsaw Pact followed the autonomous lead of the Soviet Union and condemned candid commentary.

5. See Yoo, "Three Faces," p. 2; Frank Castigliola, "Nuclear Arms, Dollars, and Berlin," in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., Kennedy's Quest for Victory : American Foreign Policy, 1961- 1963 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 51; Wilfrid L. Kohl, French Nuclear Diplomacy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 244; and Lawrence S. Kaplan, NATO and the United States: the Enduring Alliance (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988), p. 98.

6. Castigliola, "Nuclear Arms," in Paterson, ed., Kennedy's Quest, p. 51.

Chapter Two

1. Robert J. Watson, History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Vol. IV: Into the Missile Age, 1956-1960 (Washington: GPO, 1984), p 551.

2. Watson, History, p 552.

3. Schwartz, Nuclear Dilemmas, p. 124.

4. "The North Atlantic Nations: Tasks for the 1960s," General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

5. Watson, History, p 554.

6. Watson, History, p 556.

7. Ferrell, ed., Eisenhower Diaries, p. 381.

8. Herter's Speech to the NATO Council, 16 Dec 60, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

9. Herter's Speech to the NATO Council, 16 Dec 60, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

10. Herter's Speech to the NATO Council, 16 Dec 60, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

11. Secretary Herter's Further Explanatory Statement to the NATO Council on December 16, 1960 Regarding the MLF, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

12. T.V. Interview with the President, 16 Dec 62, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 23, NA.

13. Memorandum by P. de Zulueta, "France", File 52728, PREM 11/3311, PRO.

14. Charles de Gaulle, Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor (New York: Simon and Schuster 1971), p. 199.

15. Evelyn Shuckburgh to Norman Brook?, 26 Dec 60, DEFE 7/1713, PRO.

16. Brief for U.K. Delegation, "NATO M.R.B.M.s", File 52665, CAB 134/2243, PRO.

17. Evelyn Shuckburgh to Norman Brook?, 26 Dec 60, DEFE 7/1713, PRO.

18. Shuckburgh reminded Whitehall that "possession of an independent strategic deterrent has undoubtedly served us well both by increasing our general political influence and by making possible our intimate co-operation with the United States in scientific and military matters." Evelyn Shuckburgh to Norman Brook?, 26 Dec 60, DEFE 7/1713, PRO.

19. Memorandum by the Secretary of the Cabinet, 18 Jan 61, "Some Aspects of Our Relations With the United States", File 52665, CAB 133/244, PRO.

20. Memorandum by the Secretary of the Cabinet, 18 Jan 61, "Some Aspects of Our Relations With the United States, File 52665, CAB 133/244, PRO.

21. Brief by Ministry of Defense, 28 Mar 61, "Washington Talks: April 1961 - NATO Strategy and Nuclear Weapons (supplement)", File 52665, CAB 133/244, PRO.

22. Documentary evidence in Washington in London concerning the MLF proposal between 1961 and 1962, that is, during the first years of the Kennedy Administration, is particularly scarce. Although the main aspects were public knowledge, those influences and contributing factors directing the proposal's path are especially vague and at some points undiscernable.

23. "Chronology of the MLF," General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

24. "Chronology of the MLF," General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

25. "Secretary Rusk's News Conference of November 17, 1961," General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

26. Macmillan to Kennedy, 28 Apr 61, File 52665, PREM 11/4052, PRO.

27. Memorandum by the Minister of Defense, "NATO Strategy and Nuclear Weapons", File 52665, CAB 134/2243, PRO.

28. Brief for U.K. Delegation, "NATO M.R.B.M.s", File 52665, CAB 134/2243, PRO.

29. Brief by Ministry of Defense, 17 Mar 61, "Washington Talks: April 1961 - NATO Strategy and Nuclear Weapons", File 52665, CAB 133/244, PRO.

30. Paper by the Foreign Office, "The NATO Nuclear Force and the Non-Dissemination of Nuclear Weapons, File 52811, FO 371/173410, PRO.

31. Memorandum by J.L. Simpson, 4 Apr 63, File 52811, FO 371/173410, PRO.

32. "Chronology of the MLF," General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

33. "Chronology of the MLF," General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

34. "Chronology of the MLF," General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

35. Schlesinger, Thousand Days, p. 854.

36. Catherine McArdle Kelleher, Germany & the Politics of Nuclear Weapons (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 190.

37. Within Whitehall, the EEC, was also referred to as "The Six" owing to its six European members: France, West Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Denmark. Sir D. Ormsby-Gore [Wash Embassy] to F.O., 22 Jun 62, Tel. No 1656, File 52665, PREM 11/3709, PRO.

38. Memorandum, "Tripartism", DEFE 7/1713, PRO.

39. P. de Zulueta to Prime Minister, 3 April 61, File 52728, DEFE 11/3311, PRO.

40. Eric J. Grove, Vanguard to Trident (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1987), pp. 234-240.

41. Macmillan to Kennedy, 25 Feb 62, File 52665, PREM 11/4052, PRO.

42. Rusk, Saw It, p. 266.

43. Shapely, Promise, p. 242.

44. Shapely, Promise, p. 243.

45. Rusk, Saw It, p. 266.

46. Rusk, Saw It, p. 267.

47. Gore [Wash Embassy] to F.O., 7 Jan 63, Tel. No 59, File 52811, FO 371/173394, PRO.

48. Record of a meeting held at Bali-Hai, the Bahamas, 20 Dec 62, File 52728, FO 371/173393, PRO.

49. Record of a meeting held at Bali-Hai, the Bahamas, 20 Dec 62, File 52728, FO 371/173393, PRO.

50. P.E. Ramsbotham to John Barnes, 31 Dec 62, File 52747, FO 371/173395, PRO.

51. P.E. Ramsbotham to John Barnes, 31 Dec 62, File 52747, FO 371/173395, PRO.

Chapter Three

1. C.C.C. Tickell to Lord Hood, 12 Jan 63, File 52747, FO 371/173395, PRO.

2. Minutes of the Working Group on the Implementation of the Nassau Nuclear Agreement, 5 Apr 63, File 52811, FO 371/173410, PRO.

3. Gore [Wash Embassy] to F.O., 7 Jan 63, Tel. No 59, File 52811, FO 371/173394, PRO.

4. Press Conference with the President, 7 Feb 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 23, NA.

5. Press Conference with the President, 7 Feb 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 23, NA.

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9. M.A. Vicars to the Chairman of the Winchester Conservative Association, 30 Dec 62, File 52811, FO 371/173394, PRO.

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11. Peter Thomas to Selwyn Lloyd, 24 Jan 63, File 52811, FO 371/173394, PRO.

12. Peter Thomas to Selwyn Lloyd, 24 Jan 63, File 52811, FO 371/173394, PRO.

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14. Peter Thomas to Selwyn Lloyd, 24 Jan 63, File 52811, FO 371/173394, PRO.

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16. C.C.C. Tickell to Lord Hood, 12 Jan 63, File 52747, FO 371/173395, PRO.

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20. State of the Union Address, 14 Jan 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 23, NA.

21. Ferrell, ed., Eisenhower Diaries, p. 381.

22. De Gaulle, Memoirs, p. 258.

23. Full Text of President de Gaulle's Press Conference, 14 Jan 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

24. Full Text of President de Gaulle's Press Conference, 14 Jan 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 17, NA.

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27. De Gaulle, Memoirs, p. 258.

28. Rusk to Kennedy, "Possible Joint French-German Arrangements in Nuclear Weapons Field", 26 Feb 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 13, NA.

29. Bernard Ledwidge, DeGaulle (New York : St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 376.

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37. Ormsby Gore [Wash Embassy] to F.O., 30 Jan 63, Tel. No 348, File 52728, DEFE 7/1752, PRO.; Gore [Wash Embassy] to F.O., 4 Jan 63, Tel. No 5, File 52811, FO 371/173394, PRO.

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43. Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet NATO Defense Policy Committee, 10:30am, 14 Feb 63, File 52665, CAB 134/2245, PRO.

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63. Memorandum by the Chief of the Defense Staff, 28 Mar 63, "NATO Nuclear Policy", File 52811, FO 371/173410, PRO.

64. Chancery to F.O., 4 May 63, File 52728, FO 371/173458, PRO.

65. Telegram from F.O. to Paris, 8 Apr 63, File 52811, FO 371/173410, PRO.

66. Selwyn Lloyd to Prime Minister, 5 Jan 60, File 52728, PREM 11/3358, PRO.

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70. Hood to Shuckburgh, 28 Mar 63, File 52811, FO 371/173410, PRO.

71. J. Ward [Rome Embassy] to F.O., 18 May 63, Tel. No 365, File 52728, FO 371/173459, PRO.

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73. Ball to Kennedy, "What Kind of an MLF Commitment Should We Seek from the UK?", 6 May 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the

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79. Note of a meeting with Admiral Claude Ricketts, 4 Jun 63, File 52502, PREM 11/4587, PRO.

80. Note of a meeting with Admiral Claude Ricketts, 4 Jun 63, File 52502, PREM 11/4587, PRO.

81. Note of a meeting with Admiral Claude Ricketts, 4 Jun 63, File 52502, PREM 11/4587, PRO.

82. Memorandum on Mixed Manned Force of Surface Ships, File 52502, PREM 11/4587, PRO.

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Chapter Four

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2. "Multilateral Force Talks," 16 Aug 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 1, NA.

3. Comments from C.W. Wright on "A view of alternative nuclear arrangements in Europe", 3 Sep 63, DEFE 7/2020, PRO.

4. Memorandum by the Minister of Defense, 11 Sep 63, "The Multilateral Force", File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

5. Wright to the Minister of Defense, 11 Sep 63, File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

6. Memorandum by the Minister of Defense, 10 Sep 63, DEFE 7/2020, PRO.

7. Shuckburgh to F.O., 9 Sep 63, Tel. No 308, File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

8. "Draft Directive to the United Kingdom Representative on the Multilateral Force Steering Group", File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

9. Memorandum by the Foreign Secretary, "The Multilateral Force", DEFE 7/2020, PRO.

10. Memorandum by the Foreign Secretary, "The Multilateral Force", DEFE 7/2020, PRO.

11. Thorneycroft to Foreign Secretary, 5 Feb 64, File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

12. London sent the British delegation to the Working Group in Paris with specific instructions to guide them. Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh led this team which was charged to "join in an objective examination of the project in all its aspects and possible variations." Whitehall felt that the MLF concept would be more easily accepted by Parliament and the dissenters within the Government if these groups felt that all options had been explored and the seaborne surface ship scheme came out as the best alternative. Specifically, the British representatives in Paris were to ascertain the aim and purpose of the force, assure that the American maintained their veto, and present the other countries with an accurate representation of the size and cost of the project. If these above instructions were met and

the working group continued working on the American plan, the British delegation was then tasked with obtaining the best possible result that coincided with the political, military, and financial interests of Great Britain. Whitehall reminded their representatives that British support was only lukewarm at best, and therefore in whatever solution they reached, they "should aim to keep to a minimum any contingent financial liability to this country." "Draft Directive to the United Kingdom Representative on the Multilateral Force Steering Group", File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

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14. Greenhill [Wash Embassy] to F.O., 5 Sep 63, Tel. No 2764, File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

15. Furnas to the Acting Secretary, "Ambassador Grewe's Visit," 4 Oct 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 1, NA.

16. Furnas to Foster, "Proposed Security and Safety Procedures for the MLF," 26 Aug 64, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 2, NA.

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20. Memorandum by the Military Sub-Group of the MLF Working Group, 25 Oct 63, "Report of Findings of Mixed-Manned Demonstration", File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

21. Memorandum from Merchant, "Consultations with Congressional Leaders on the MLF," 21 Nov 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 1, NA.

22. Merchant to Rusk, "Issues for the President: The MLF," 21 Nov 63, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 1, NA.

23. "Briefing of General Eisenhower on MLF," 15 Jan 64, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 2, NA.

24. Memorandum by the Foreign Secretary, "The Multilateral Force", DEFE 7/2020, PRO.

25. Wright to Hockaday, 8 Nov 63, File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

26. Peter Thorneycroft to Earl Jellicoe, 7 Feb 64, File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

27. Peter Thorneycroft to Earl Jellicoe, 7 Feb 64, File 52551, DEFE 11/314, PRO.

28. Record of the Prime Minister's talks with President Johnson at the White House, 12 Feb 64, CAB 133/247, PRO.

29. "MLF Meeting of February 6, 1964," 6 Feb 64, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 2, NA.

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32. Merchant to Rusk, "Congressional Briefings on MLF," 7 Feb 64, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 2, NA.

33. Yoo, "Three Faces," p. 94.

34. Wilson, Personal Record, p. 46.

35. Smith to Rusk, "Principal MLF Developments," 20 Apr 64, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 2, NA.

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38. Smith to Rusk, "Possible Sunday Talk with Mr. Butler," 25 Apr 64, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 2, NA.

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43. "U.S. Not to Make Its Deadline on Multilateral Force Decisions," Washington Post, 15 Oct 64, p. A10.

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45. Paul W. Ward, "Limited-A-Fleet Idea Discounted," Baltimore Sun, 8 Oct 64.

46. Roberts [Bonn Embassy] to FO, 10 Oct 64, Tel. No 245, PREM 13/025, PRO.

47. Smith to Philip Farley, 8 Oct 64, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 3, NA.

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50. Memorandum of a Conversation between Holifield and Philander Claxton, 4 Oct 64, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot File 68D301, Box 3, NA.

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2. National Security Action Memorandum No. 318, 14 Nov 64, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 12, NA.

3. Yoo, "Three Faces," p. 100.

4. Wilson, Personal Record, p. 46.

5. Note of a conversation between Neustadt and Healey, 25 Nov 64, PREM 13/026, PRO.

6. Note of a conversation between Neustadt and Healey, 25 Nov 64, PREM 13/026, PRO.

7. Harold Wilson, A Personal Record: The Labour Government, 1964-1970 (Boston: Little, Brown 1971), p. 46.

8. Wright to Wilson, 2 Dec 64, File 52665, PREM 13/103, PRO.

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10. Trend to Wilson, 25 Nov 64, PREM 13/026, PRO.

11. Charles Bartlett, "Europeans Fear U.S. Pushes Too Hard," Washington Star, 22 Nov 64.

12. Wright, Note for the Record, 27 Nov 64, File 52665, PREM 13/103, PRO.

13. Foreign Secretary to Lord Harlech, 19 Oct 64, PREM 13/025, PRO.

14. Wright, Note for the Record (Conversation between Bruce and Wilson), 27 Nov 64, File 52665, PREM 13/103, PRO.

15. Yoo, "Three Faces," p. 101.

16. Many contemporaries and historians accused LBJ of allowing domestic policy to drive foreign policy. Domestic policy became his forte during his years in the Senate and when he rose to the presidency he preferred to spend his time and attention on issues inside the United States. This fact lends itself to the argument that Johnson often subjected

American foreign policy to the demands of domestic policy. The MLF is a perfect example of a case in which Johnson decided foreign policy largely on the basis of how it would affect his legislative program at home. See John Choo Yoo, "Three Faces of Hegemony: Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and the Multilateral Force" (Unpubl. Honors Thesis, Harvard University, 1989), p. 100-110.; Philip L.Geyelin, Lyndon B. Johnson and the World (New York: Praeger 1966), p. 142.

17. Geyelin, Johnson, p. 169.

18. Geyelin, Johnson, p. 162.

19. Wilson, Personal Record, p. 50.

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21. Tyler to Rusk, 8 Jan 65, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Entry 5250, Lot Files 66D301, Box 12, NA.

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23. Thomas Hughes to Rusk, 13 Jan 65, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Executive Secretariat - Multilateral Force Documents, 1960-65, Entry 5053, Lot File 66D182, Box 4, NA.

24. F.O. to Washington, 15 Jan 65, File 52811, FO 371/184427, PRO.

25. F.O. to Washington, 15 Jan 65, File 52811, FO 371/184427, PRO.

26. Geyelin, Johnson, p. 177.

27. "Summary of European Reaction to US Nuclear Policies - January 22 - February 2, 1965," 22 Jan 65, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot Files 68D301, Box 3, NA.

28. "Summary of European Reaction to US Nuclear Policies - January 22 - February 2, 1965," 22 Jan 65, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Office of the

Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Multilateral Force Negotiations (S/MF), Chronological Files 1963-1965, Entry 5248, Lot Files 68D301, Box 3, NA.

29. Thomas Hughes to Rusk, 13 Jan 65, General Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Executive Secretariat - Multilateral Force Documents, 1960-65, Entry 5053, Lot File 66D182, Box 4, NA.

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